THE BEAUTY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

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BURRIS JENKINS, D. D.

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BY

BURRIS JENKINS, D.D.

Author of "Princess Salome," "The Man in the Street and Religion," "The Protestant," etc.

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THE BEAUTY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT
—B—
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To the Late

DR. JOSEPH HENRY THAYER

of Harvard, whose love of beautiful English and beautiful Greek, whose saintly and scholarly life, influenced and still influence those fortunate enough to have sat at his feet, this book is dedicated in loving memory.

PREFACE

Charm and beauty, as well as truth, shine in the New Testament.

We are aware of the literary and artistic value of the Old Testament, and, in the past, have felt that no culture was complete without some knowledge of the Hebrew sacred books. It seems, however, that we are not all of us quite aware how important is the New Testament, as well, to those who desire familiarity with the best in literature.

The books of the Bible—for the Bible is a library made up of many books—are brief, and almost any one of them may be read at a single short sitting. This practice is to be recommended, as one can obtain a better grasp of any document by reading it straight through than by sketching isolated paragraphs. Any book of the New Testament may be read in the same length of time as a modern magazine story or article.

This volume is written in the hope of stimulating reading and appreciation of the books contained in the collection called the New Testament. It is hoped, however, that one who goes faithfully through these pages and reads only the extracts contained in them, will have a fairly good idea of the most valuable parts of the New Testament.

It is certain beforehand that somebody's favorite passage will be omitted. It is a pity, but it is impossible to quote it all.

The quotations in this volume are from the new translation by James Moffatt, issued by George H. Doran Company, New York. It is fortunate indeed that we should have, in our own modern English, so lucid, accurate, and highly literary a version. By means of it we are enabled to bring the New Testament into touch with our present-day standards of taste. In the older versions the "thees and thous" of seventeenth-century English tend to blur for us the picture. The Moffatt New Testament, furthermore, will help us to strip ourselves of old associations that cluster around favorite passages and thus bias our judgment of their literary value. Use and wont are the parents of prejudice. We shall here try to take a clean page.

Most readers, accustomed to the King James version, which has been endeared to them by long use, will have difficulty at first, no doubt, in becoming used to the modern phraseology of the Moffatt translation. In reality, however, the strangeness of this phraseology will but aid the reader in forming a just estimate of the literary value of these New Testament writings. The unaccustomed phraseology and turns of expression will capture and enchain the reader's attention; and, in the long run, the more modern translation will win its way into his esteem and finally affection.

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Book One: JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

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Book One: JESUS IN THE GOSPELS

Chapter I

ARTISTRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Just as art is beauty in expression, so religion is beauty resident within the soul. Art, then, while not identical with religion, is the handmaiden of it. To speak beautifully, write, sing, paint, carve, or build beautifully is to put religion into visible form. To live beautifully is naturally the finest of all the fine arts; for it is to put religion into flesh and blood, the most readable, even if the most perishable, of documents.

It is not surprising, therefore, to find the best expressions of religion falling into forms of natural beauty. Beauty is the spirit inherent in religion, as well as the clothing, the outward covering and drapery of religion. The religious literature of the Hebrews, —songs, stories, histories, rhapsodies, epics—possesses passages of rare beauty and charm. So do the books of other religions. The purer and intenser the faith, the more beautiful we should expect its expressions to be. If we regard the Christian religion as the highest, we have the right to look to the literature that enshrines it for artistic qualities.

It is a habit with us to regard the New Testament as true. It is not so much a habit to think of it as

beautiful. Truth and beauty intertwine. They live together, range and work together, die together. The gospels, therefore, should contain not only a story of importance but one of loveliness. We ought to find, as indeed we do find, that the whole story, or the short stories embodied in it, the symphony or the themes, the entire epic or the lyrics enshrined within it, all meet the requirements of the arts. We are constantly paying unconscious tribute to that beauty by quoting it, shaping our lives by it, using it in our paintings, carvings, buildings.

It is a habit with us to praise the exalted passages in the Old Testament, the gardens of Genesis, the springs and oases of Exodus, the stately palms of the prophets, and the poignant lyrics of the psalmists; but we are not perhaps so mindful of the excellences in the story of Jesus, in the narrative of the genesis of the Church, in the personal letters of the apostles, in the visions of Revelation.

With all the restraint and skill manifest in the Old Testament stories, they are not superior to the simple power and beauty in the New Testament. Unity, clearness, brevity without sacrifice of the picturesque, all the qualities of skillful narration are here. Later writers have tried to put these stories into their own words for modern consumption, only to show how futile is the attempt at duplication or imitation.

Writers in the first and second centuries issued other gospels, enlarging upon or supplementing the original four. These "apocryphal" gospels have, some of them, come down to us; and their fantastic shoddiness is apparent. They make of the child Jesus a

vindictive and mischievous schoolboy, ruthlessly punishing his rivals, and fashioning birds and animals of clay, only to endow them with life and action. These apocrypha are valueless, and the centuries have so pronounced.

After all, it is the ages which test the value of literature as art. Older than most of the classics, the Gospels have weathered time, stood the test of centuries, inspired painters, sculptors, builders, poets and musicians. Four short narratives, drawing from common sources, and sometimes duplicating each other, they manifest a rare power of survival. There are hymns of India, beautiful poetry, sayings of Confucius, clear-eyed ethics, dialogues of Greek philosophers, and Roman legendry, the Al Koran, and all the sacred books of the East; but in all this literature, one must search through a great amount of dross to find the gold. In the Gospels the gold is easy to find.

Tested by its effect upon the lives of men, upon the institutions, the civilizations of humanity, the New Testament reveals its weight. It has shaped Western civilization, in ethics, in jurisprudence, in ideals. The West may not yet live by it; but the West feels that it ought to live by it. Here is testimony to the worth of the book.

Each of the four Gospels has its individuality. The Middle Ages adopted certain symbols to characterize the four; and these symbols appear in the carvings and the stained glass of many churches. A man or an angel stands for Matthew, indicating that the Christ here set forth is the Saviour, or Messiah, of long Hebrew expectation. A lion is for Mark, because of

the daring and rapid narrative. An ox or a calf resents Luke, because it is the gospel of unive salvation for all sinners, no matter what their nat ality. The eagle stands for The Fourth Gospel bec of its soaring character.

The first three gospels, called the Synoptics, semble each other to a degree, and differ mark from the fourth; but even the first three show am themselves differences in manner and purpose. M thew, written most likely at Jerusalem, is for Je Mark, at Rome, for Romans; Luke, at Caesarea or haps Corinth, is for Greeks; and John, at Ephe for all the world.

The first three gospels undoubtedly drew from c mon sources—the "Logia of Matthew," or the spee of Jesus set down in the original Aramaic, underl all three. The Fourth Gospel shows the influence Greek atmosphere, Greek philosophy, Greek art. dates from late in the first century or possibly from the second century. If written by John, the loved Disciple, it flows from his ripest age and f the culture he imbibed at Ephesus. If it comes from the hand of John, then some follower of some faithful disciple who had sat at the feet of white-bearded seer of Patmos, gave to the world account of the gospel story, enshrined in that go atmosphere which even yet hangs over "the g that was Greece." It is perhaps safe to say that favorite of the four gospels among Bible reader the one that bears the name of John. Doubtless is because it is so colored by the spirit of that pe whose very religion itself was beauty.

One of our modern poets has drawn for us an imaginative picture of the rise of these narratives in the poem, "Before the Gospels Were."

"Long noons and evenings after he was gone,
Mary, the Mother, Matthew, Luke and John
And all of those who loved him to the last,
Went over all the marvel of the past;
Went over all the old familiar ways,
With tender talk of dear remembered days.
They walked the roads that never gave him rest,
Past Jordan's ford, past Kedron's bridge,
Up Olivet, up Hermon's ridge,
To that last road, the one they loved the best.

. . . . . .

So huddling often by the chimney's blaze,
Or going down the old remembered ways,
They held their wonder-talk.
Minding each other of some sacred spot,
Minding each other of some word forgot;
So gathering up till all the whispered words
Went to the four winds like a flight of birds."

Chapter II

THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF JESUS

The stories of the birth and childhood of Jesus, brief as they are, reveal the skill and simplicity of the narrators. There is restraint when the temptation to elaboration and exaggeration is evident. There is plain statement when it would have been so easy to lapse into sentimentalism.

The advent of Prince Gautama, the Buddha, Light of Asia, the legendary birth of Hiawatha, the hero of the children of Manitou the Mighty, the marvelous tales of the birth-nights of princes and kings, rather suffer by comparison with this simple history. Moreover, the story sounds true; and the writers reveal themselves as sincere. A thing cannot be beautiful unless it be true. Truth and beauty go together. Unless a narrative has the ring of truth—what we call verisimilitude—it cannot lay claim to be called fine art.

It is supposed by some that Luke, the physician, came to know personally Mary the Mother of Jesus in her later years; hence his story of the infancy is fuller than that of the others. What Mary thought and felt and said are told by him as if he had some especial knowledge of these things.

Before the birth of Jesus, when strange things were happening to the young Virgin of Nazaret, she sings a song that still lives. Mary leaves her home in Galilee to visit her kinswoman Elizabeth—afterward mother of John the Baptist—and there, in the hills

of Judaea, learns what all these strange things mean.

With a mingled apprehension and rejoicing in her soul, she sings what is now called "The Magnificat," a favorite hymn of the church for centuries. As Luke records it in his opening chapter, it contains all the national feeling of the songs of Miriam and Deborah, with an added strain of universality that foreshadows the teaching of the new and Greater Prophet.

THE SONG OF MARY

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
My spirit has joy in God my Saviour:
for he has considered the humiliation of his servant.
From this time forth all generations will call me blessed,
for He who is Mighty has done great things for me.
His name is holy,
his mercy is on generation after generation,
for those who reverence him.
He has done a deed of might with his arm,
he has scattered the proud with their purposes,
princes he has dethroned and the poor he has uplifted,
he has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty."

The scene shifts to the sheep-dotted valleys southwest of Jerusalem, where nestles to this day the city of Bethlehem. A Mecca for travelers from all over the world, with its church of the Nativity and its fabled manger, it glitters with bazaars and shops full of brass and leather-goods, of glass jewelry and mother-of-

pearl beads made of shells brought from the Red Sea. For two thousand years before Christ, Bethlehem stood beside the great caravan route from Egypt to the East, —the oldest road on earth—and possessed a large inn, or khan, one of the largest of the time. Bethlehem is supposed to be one of the three oldest towns in the world. Phillips Brooks made a lyric about it that has become classic:

"O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by;
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee to-night.

"How silently, how silently,
The wondrous gift is giv'n!
So God imparts to human hearts
The blessings of His Heav'n.
No ear may hear his coming,
But in this world of sin,
Where meek souls will receive him still,
The dear Christ enters in."

THE LOWLY BIRTH

No little journey in Palestine more satisfies eyes and heart than the drive from Jerusalem down to Bethlehem, the very ancient "House of Bread." Now there are wide smooth roads winding through the valleys

and round the bases of the Judæan hills; in the day of Jesus no doubt the great east and west road presented much the same appearance winding through the long grasses of the poppy-starred pastures. To right and left, as one approaches the birth-place, one may see even yet the flocks of sheep grazing beside the cloaked figures of their shepherds. There, on the hither side of the present city is the well at Bethlehem, the well of the boyhood of David, the well for the water of which he sighed when a beleaguered outlaw fleeing from the anger of Saul, the well to which in the night three of his mighty men of valor broke through enemy lines, at risk of life, to bring him a cruse of water which he refused to drink, pouring it out as a libation and saying: "How can I drink the blood of my young men?" Here is the ancient well that made the town, where shepherds for thousands of years had brought their flocks to drink, and where they bring them to this day. No man knows where the khan, or inn, stood, in the days when Quirinius was governor of Syria; but we may be very sure it was hard by the well, and that it resembled a hundred khans that one encounters in rural spots in the Holy Land to-day.

The song came over the open roof of that great, crowded inn and its stable, over the plains hard by where shepherds slept beside their flocks that night,

"It came upon the midnight clear,
That glorious song of old,
From angels bending near the earth
To touch their harps of gold:

'Peace to the earth, good-will to men
From Heaven's all-gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
To hear the angels sing."

That birth-story has been told over and over by skilled literary artists, by poets and golden-mouthed orators; but, after all, none has yet surpassed the simple strokes of the pen of Luke:

"Now in those days an edict was issued by Caesar Augustus for a census of the whole world. (This was the first census, and it took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) So every one went to be registered, each at his own town, and as Joseph belonged to the house and family of David he went up from Galilee to Judaea, from the town of Nazaret to David's town called Bethlehem, to be registered along with Mary his wife. She was pregnant, and while they were there the days elapsed for her delivery; she gave birth to her first-born son, and as there was no room for them inside the khan she wrapped him up and laid him in a stall for cattle. There were some shepherds in the district who were out in the fields keeping guard over their flocks by night; and an angel of the Lord flashed upon them, the glory of the Lord shone all round them. They were terribly afraid, but the angel said to them, 'Have no fear. This is good news I am bringing you, news of a great joy that is meant for all the people. To-day you have a saviour born in the town of David, the Lord messiah. And here is a proof for you: you will find a baby wrapped up

and lying in a stall for cattle.' Then a host of heaven's army suddenly appeared beside the angel extolling God and saying,

"'Glory to God in high heaven,
and peace on earth for men whom he favors!'

"Now when the angels had left them and gone away to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us be off to Bethlehem to see this thing that the Lord has told us of.' So they made haste and discovered Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the stall for cattle. When they saw this they told people about the word which had been spoken to them about the child; all who heard it were astonished at the story of the shepherds, and as for Mary, she treasured it all up and mused upon it. Then the shepherds went away back, glorifying and extolling God for all they had heard and seen as they had been told they would."

HEROD AND THE MAGI

What took place that night in the stable of the inn touched and affected the upper as well as the lower strata of society. Shepherds not only, but also the intellectual artistocracy, wise men, came to his cradle, and even the political power of jealous Herodian princes started up alarmed and drew its bloody sword.

Lew Wallace, in his *Ben Hur,* and Henry Van Dyke in his *Other Wise Man,* have painted their pictures of these magians who came from afar to pay their homage to the new-born prince. Scores of others,

poets and painters, have taken the story as their theme. The mighty pen of Milton has touched it. Addressing his own muse he sings:

"See how from far upon the eastern road
The star-led wizards haste with odors sweet!
Oh! run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at His blessed feet;
Have thou the honor first thy Lord to greet,
And join thy voice unto the angel choir,
From out His secret altar touched with hallowed fire."

Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar—these are the fabled names of the wise men—"whether from Naishapur or Babylon," whether from Egypt or Greece, were doctors, alchemists, astrologers, wizards, men learned in the lore supposed to control the genealogies and destinies of kings. Naturally they considered it their business when signs seemed to point to a prince that should supplant emperors who now ruled the world. They came to see. Herod also, the petty kinglet, under Rome, thought it his business, too, when a new prince broke into his domain.

No doubt the magi, mounted on camels, while the camel-bells chimed in silver tones, met by appointment either in their own lands or on the borders of Syria, possibly under the oaks of Hebron or the dews of Hermon, and, pitching their black tents beside one of the great caravan routes that led from Egypt to Assyria or from Rome to Jerusalem, sat down to consider their plan of action. At last they came to consult Herod, and, distrustful of his black and frown-

ing countenance, outwitted him and lent his evil purpose no aid. Matthew, however, tells this story as no other can ever hope to rival. He tells it very simply. Emerson once said, "To be great is to be simple."

"Now when Jesus was born at Bethlehem, belonging to Judaea, in the days of King Herod, magicians from the East arrived at Jerusalem, asking, 'Where is the newly-born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose, and we have come to worship him.' The news of this troubled King Herod and all Jerusalem as well, so he gathered all the high priests and scribes of the people and made inquiries of them about where the messiah was to be born. They told him, 'In Bethlehem belonging to Judaea: for thus it is written by the prophet:

" 'And you Bethlehem, in Judah's land,
You are not least among the rulers of Judah;
For a ruler will come from you,
Who will shepherd Israel my people.'

"Then Herod summoned the magicians in secret and ascertained from them the time of the star's appearance. He also sent them to Bethlehem, telling them, 'Go and make a careful search for the child, and when you have found him report to me, so that I can go and worship him too.' The magicians listened to the king and then went their way. And the star they had seen rise went in front of them till it stopped over the place where the child was. When they caught

sight of the star they were intensely glad. And on reaching the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, they fell down to worship him, and opening their caskets they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. Then, as they had been divinely warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they went back to their own country by a different road."

MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS

Tragedy follows hard upon the birth of the young Prince, a tragedy as deep as ever thrilled an audience in an Athenian theater. The forces of this world, the Fates, as the Greeks called them, contending for place and power, caught many little lives in their web at Bethlehem, and brought mourning to many mothers.

Warned of the jealousy of the reigning Herod, called the Great, Joseph took the child Jesus and his Mother away into Egypt. Herod searched Bethlehem to find him. Matthew tells of the tragedy with pathetic brevity in chapter two:

"Then Herod saw the magicians had trifled with him, and he was furiously angry; he sent and slew all the male children in Bethlehem and in all the neighborhood who were two years old or under, calculating by the time he had ascertained from the magicians. Then the saying was fulfilled which had been uttered by the prophet Jeremiah:

" 'A cry was heard in Rama,
weeping and sore lamentation—

Rachel weeping for her children,
and inconsolable because they are no more.' "

The lonely flight into Egypt of the little family of three closes the story of the infancy. Mary, still weakened from her experience, no doubt was shielded by the "just man," her husband, from all possible fatigues, and yet, at best, the journey must have racked body and soul. Artists have pictured the Holy Family encamped in the shadow of the pyramids, with Mary and the babe sleeping in the very arms of the Sphinx. Matthew ends the story with a succinct account of the return to the hill country of Galilee, when Joseph learns that Archelaus reigns in the place of his father, Herod. For Luke the narrative closes with the graceful and simple word:

"When they had finished all the regulations of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazaret. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the favour of God was on him."

THE BOY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

One further incident, and one only, lightens the darkness of the thirty years spent in Nazaret. Jesus, the son of a carpenter, himself became a carpenter, shaping handles for plows, axes and adzes, and making yokes as smooth and easy for the necks of oxen as he well could. He grew to rugged and athletic manhood, a great pedestrian and lover of the out-of-doors.

Richard Burton, a contemporary poet, has sung sweetly of "The Carpenter Lad":

"His spirit was hale as the sweet, fresh wood
He used to plane and trim;
And the little children (who understood),
They always clung to him;
He spoke of a dream of Brotherhood—
Men hung him on a limb."

The incident of a visit at twelve years of age to the Passover feast at Jerusalem sheds the single ray of light into this long dim period of his youth; but what an incident! And what illumination it sheds over the strange character of the budding genius as well as over the tender relations existing between him and his father and mother! Heinrich Hoffman has put before the eyes of the world his conception of the wise-faced boy and the eager, though doubtful and enquiring countenances of the scribes and doctors of the law, with an effectiveness and an acceptance that few pictures have ever attained. Luke alone gives us this story, at the close of the second chapter:

"Every year his parents used to travel to Jerusalem at the passover festival; and when he was twelve years old they went up as usual to the festival. After spending the full number of days they came back, but the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know of this: they supposed he was in the caravan and travelled on for a day, searching for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances. Then, as

they failed to find him, they came back to Jersualem in search of him. Three days later they found him in the temple, seated among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, till all his hearers were amazed at the intelligence of his own answers. When his parents saw him they were astounded, and his mother said to him, 'My son, why have you behaved like this to us? Here have your father and I been looking for you anxiously!' 'Why did you look for me?' he said. 'Did you not know I had to be at my Father's house?' But they did not understand what he said. Then he went down along with them to Nazaret, and did as they told him. His mother treasured up everything in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favour with God and man."

So ends the story of the birth and boyhood of Our Lord, told only by Matthew and Luke. No other stories are so well known; yet none still holds the attention of the civilized world after all these years as this one does; none has so influenced the world.

Chapter III

CHARACTER-SKETCH—THE BAPTIST

It is one thing to see a character vividly with the eye of the imagination, another thing to make the reader see. Here lies the difficult task and the fine art of the historian, poet, dramatist, or story-teller. With swift, sure strokes the evangelists accomplish this feat in outlining many of the characters who appear in their narratives. Think of Simon Peter, of Thomas, of Mary and Martha. The character of John the Baptist illustrates this skill, however, perhaps better than any other of the minor personages in the gospel-story. The writers suggest rather than elaborate, and leave much to the reader's imagination.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all draw the picture, for here all the synoptic gospels unite. "Synoptic" is from two Greek words meaning to see together, or alike; hence capable of synopsis. Matthew's account is not quite so condensed as Mark's, and therefore holds more detail, more color, is more picturesque. Mark here seems more virile and alive than Luke. Mark is always nervous, condensed, rapid. Luke is more literary than either of the others, and amply justifies the word of Ernest Renan, who says, "Luke is the most beautiful book that ever existed."

For the present purpose of setting before our eyes a swift and vivid character-sketch, Matthew's account, fuller and richer in detail, is perhaps best adapted:

"In those days John the Baptist came on the scene, preaching in the desert of Judaea, 'Repent, the Reign of heaven is near.' (This was the man spoken of by the prophet Isaiah:

"The voice of one who cries in the desert, 'Make the way ready for the Lord, level the paths for him.')

"This John had his clothes made of camel's hair, with a leather girdle round his loins; his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and the whole of Judaea and all the Jordan-district went out to him and got baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he noticed a number of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming for his baptism, he said to them, 'You brood of vipers, who told you to flee from the coming Wrath? Now, produce fruit that answers to your repentance, instead of presuming to say to yourselves, "We have a father in Abraham." I tell you, God can raise up children for Abraham from these stones! The axe is lying all ready at the root of the trees; any tree that is not producing good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

" 'I baptize you with water for repentance, but he who is coming after me is mightier, and I am not fit even to carry his sandals; he will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand, he will clean out his threshing-floor, his wheat he will gather into the granary, but the straw he will burn with fire unquenchable.'

"Then Jesus came on the scene from Galilee, to get baptized by John at the Jordan. John tried to prevent him; 'I need to get baptized by you,' he said, 'and you come to me!' But Jesus answered him, 'Come now,

this is how we should fulfil all our duty to God.' Then John gave in to him. Now when Jesus had been baptized, the moment he rose out of the water, the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove upon him. And a voice from heaven said,

> " 'This is my Son, the Beloved,
> in him is my delight.' "

How quickly the atmosphere, the setting, of the portrait is produced, and how rapid the movement! John "came"; he came "preaching"; he came into the "wilderness" of Judaea, the rocky wastes, with sparse shrubbery and undergrowth. His message is given in a sentence: "Repent, the Reign of Heaven is near." This is all buttressed with a quotation from the Old Testament.

Now the sketch, clean-cut, not a superfluous word, follows; but it stands out as if carved,—the camel's hair raiment, the leathern girdle, the food of locusts and wild honey. Then the crowds pouring out to him, his magnetic attraction. The defiance of the reigning rulers, "Generation of vipers!" The assault on the entire social structure, the ax at the root of the tree. The concrete language he uses, the pictures he draws, unloosing shoes, the fan of the threshing floor, wheat into bins, fire for chaff. A few paragraphs only, and John the Baptist stands before the world, painted since by a thousand artists, but always in the way this first sketch outlines.

The fourth gospel, that of St. John, differs from the

rest. The writer takes the liberty to make his own comment. He shows the influence of Greek reading, in his thinking, not only, but also in his manner. A few of his sentences will show the freedom of St. John's style:

"A man appeared, sent by God, whose name was John: he came for the purpose of witnessing, to bear testimony to the Light, so that all men might believe by means of him. He was not the Light; it was to bear testimony to the Light that he appeared. The real Light, which enlightens every man, was coming then into the world: . . . (John testified to him with the cry, 'This was he of whom I said, my successor has taken precedence of me, for he preceded me.') For we have all been receiving grace after grace from his fulness; while the Law was given through Moses, grace and reality are ours through Jesus Christ."

The fourth gospel adds a touch of pathos to the picture of the Baptist, which the other gospels do not, illustrating the Baptist's word: "He must wax, I must wane."

"Next day again John was standing with two of his disciples; he gazed at Jesus as he walked about, and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God!' The two disciples heard what he said and went after Jesus."

After the sunset follows the night; and darkness settles over the head of the Baptist. In the sad dungeon of Machaerus, among the gashed mountains

that look down upon the Dead Sea, Herod's anger lodges him. Here for centuries had been the resort of ascetics, Ebionites, Essenes, prophets of the wilderness. Here they lived in caves and dens, dressed in skins and hair-cloth. Herod makes a sort of sarcastic gesture in this choice of prisons; for this neighborhood, no doubt, was the original home of the Baptist.

Finally in the banquet-hall, probably at Jericho, the City of Palms, a favorite residence of the Herods, the jealous king, drunk and maudlin, passes sentence of death upon the prophet. Poets, dramatists, painters, have long recognized the beauty and the tragic value of the story; but their efforts have not improved it, or even equaled it. It is the old theme so true to human experience of the prophet, the artist, the teacher, who dares to tell the truth to his generation, paying for it with his life. Matthew, at the opening of his fourteenth chapter, heading the story with the guilty remorse of Herod, goes back chronologically to bring up his narrative:

"At that time Herod the tetrarch heard about the fame of Jesus. And he said to his servants, 'This is John the Baptist; he has risen from the dead. That is why miraculous powers are working through him.' For Herod had arrested John and bound him and put him in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, since John had told him, 'You have no right to her.' He was anxious to kill him but he was afraid of the people, for they held John to be a prophet. However, on Herod's birthday, the daughter

of Herodias danced in public to the delight of Herod; whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatever she wanted. And she, at the instigation of her mother, said, 'Give me John the Baptist's head this moment on a dish.' The king was sorry, but for the sake of his oath and his guests he ordered it to be given her; he sent and had John beheaded in the prison, his head was brought on a dish and given to the girl, and she took it to her mother. His disciples came and removed the corpse and buried him; then they went and reported it to Jesus."

The daughter of Herodias, traditionally known as Salome, has appealed to the dramatic sense of poets and artists ever since,—as to Stephen Phillips and Oscar Wilde. How many startling pictures have been drawn of her; how many varying phases the dark-eyed ruthless beauty has presented to the world! She and her mother and Herod furnish a sinister background for the rugged and devoted figure of the Baptist. It is a forbidding tale, to be sure, and its charm is the charm of Dante's Inferno; its beauty is the beauty of Gustave Doré. There is beauty, however, in a thunder storm and in the jagged lightning, just as in the tragic catastrophes of Lear and Macbeth and John the Baptist.

Chapter IV

JESUS CHOOSES HIS FRIENDS

The character and the environment of the men Jesus chose for his inner circle of followers at the beginning of his public career arrest attention. The selection of such a cabinet might seem a commonplace procedure; but in this instance it is attended both by the grace of his own bearing and the atmosphere of hill, valley and lake.

The character of the men he chooses lends charm to the story. He seems not at all to consult expediency. One would expect him to select some one or two from the ruling classes, the scribes and Pharisees, conservative pillars of the existing order. One would look somewhere in the number for a prominent merchant or business man. A soldier there should be, too, a spiritual descendant of David, the lion of the tribe of Judah. A herdsman, one would expect, would be selected to represent a pastoral nation, or a landholder, a sheik of wide ranges and patriarchal dignity.

To our surprise he chooses principally young fishermen, all dwelling about one little lake. Four of them are partners. The Master makes no attempt at wide distribution or selection from this or that tribe,—he takes the friends that are nearest at hand or the strangers that happen to appear. It is a picturesque procedure, attended with picturesque incidents. One man is a publican, surely an inadvertent and unwise

choice, a tax-gatherer, hated by the people. Nobody likes to pay taxes, particularly to a foreign oppressor. Rome farmed out the gathering of taxes to the highest bidding publican. He, in turn, exacted from the people no set sum, but the last drop of blood he could wring. Why did Jesus choose Matthew, or Levi, as he was variously called, to be one of his twelve? Why did he choose the traitor Judas? There is no answer. Certainly he did not consult expediency. Every step in the selection of the cabinet is unexpected and daring.

CALLING FISHERMEN

Renan calls Jesus "The Charming Rabbi." The words Jesus uses in summoning his followers evince something of this charm. He sees four men fishing, and he says: "Follow me, I will make you fish for men," —an appeal to their business. He does not explain, outline their duties, forecast their rewards. He utters what is, after all, his great message to all the world, "Follow me!" Forsaking all, they follow.

The Lake of Galilee, blue as the sky, lies six hundred feet below the level of the Mediterranean which is only some thirty miles away. Fed by the Jordan, which rises to the north from the "dews of Hermon," it drains into that same river, which goes tumbling through chasms and gorges, until, across the plains of Jericho it crawls into the salt pit of the Dead Sea. The Lake, surrounded by the hills of Galilee—blue Galilee—changes in an hour from calm to tempest. To this day the capricious little sea presents just about the same appearance that it did two thousand years ago, dotted

with fishing boats, lateen-rigged, their sails red and brown, with fishers' mud-huts clustered at intervals along its margin.

One day we left Tiberias under a cloudless sky and sailed to Bethsaida, the home of Peter and Andrew, when, after luncheon on the grass, and an hour among the fallen columns of Capharnahum, we started the return journey with a fair wind. Almost within sight of Tiberias a storm swooped down from the hills, and, furling our sails, we took to the oars and only with great difficulty made the shore. In half an hour the sun shone clear again.

The lake, shaped like a pear, with the heavy end toward the north, and the stem represented by the Jordan flowing out at the south, measures thirteen miles in length and six miles in width at the widest part. Fish abound in it, now as then, and feed the country-side. The same types of rugged personality appear in the boatmen and fishermen now, no doubt, as frequented these shores in the time of Jesus. From such men as these Jesus selected the cabinet for his world-shaping realm.

The fourth chapter of Matthew contains the narrative:

"As he was walking along the sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew, casting a net in the sea—for they were fishermen; so he said to them, 'Come, follow me, and I will make you fish for men.' And they dropped their nets at once and followed him. Then going on from there he saw two other brothers, James the son of

Zebedaeus and his brother John, mending their nets in the boat beside their father Zebedaeus. He called them, and they left the boat and their father at once, and went after him."

In two instances, the man called to be an apostle first hurries away to find his brother and summons him to share in the honor and privilege; thus in both cases these men reveal something of their own character. These two men have given their names to one of the great fraternities whose purpose is the finding of fellow-men—the Brotherhood of Andrew and Philip.

First Andrew calls his brother Simon, his greater brother. He must have known that Simon would outshine him. Andrew lived in Simon Peter's house with Peter's wife and her mother. Probably then Andrew was unmarried himself; and the Hebrews regarded it as a great misfortune if a man reached maturity without wife, children, and a home of his own. Then, they said, "He had not where to lay his head." One cannot but speculate about the economic necessity, or the care of aged parents, or the various other obstacles, which prevented Andrew from forming domestic ties; and one cannot but feel that here is a self-sacrifice on the part of Andrew in order that his more restless, ambitious, and determined brother, Simon, might have the opportunities of life. Andrew, therefore, though possibly the older, from this time forth takes second place. Simon Peter becomes the natural leader of the twelve, the secretary of state for the cabinet.

No character in the New Testament stands out more clearly from the pages than Simon Peter—the rock

apostle. We shall see him from time to time as plainly as if he were painted, and more alive than any portrait. He plunges into the sea, trying to walk to Jesus on the water; on another occasion he cannot wait for the boat in which he is, to reach the shore where Jesus stands, but leaps into the water to swim ashore. He draws a sword and strikes in the garden of Gethsemane, and the same night denies, with oaths, that he knows Jesus. On the mount of transfiguration, he wants to pitch tents and stay forever. Daring, mercurial, quixotic, self-assertive, he could not help but lead. Yet he has the defects of his qualities; and even in later years, when his character becomes so much calmer and more reliable, he never entirely overcomes his limitations. St. Paul contends with him and "withstands him to the face, for he was to be blamed."

Even in old age, according to the tradition, he could not always keep firm; for when persecution arose at Rome, Peter fled from the city. As he hurried out the Appian Way, the apparition of Jesus met him in the road. Simon Peter tremblingly enquired:

"Quo vadis, Domini?"—"Whither goest thou, Lord?"

"Back into the city to die again with my people!" answered the Master.

Then Peter turned about, went into Rome, was taken and condemned to crucifixion. As they nailed him to the cross, Simon begged that he be crucified head downward, since he considered himself unworthy to die as his Lord had died. And it was done. This old legend, whether authentic or fanciful, is none the less true to the character of Simon.

On one occasion Jesus told Simon that Satan desired to have him that he might sift him as wheat. From this phrase an old folk-song has found its way into our language through Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:

"In Saint Luke's Gospel we are told
How Peter in the days of old
Was sifted;
And now, though ages intervene,
Sin is the same, while time and scene
Are shifted.

"For all at last the cock will crow
Who hear the warning voice, but go
Unheeding,
Till thrice and more they have denied
The Man of Sorrows, crucified
And bleeding.

"But noble souls, through dust and heat,
Rise from disaster and defeat
The stronger,
And conscious still of the divine
Within them, lie on earth supine
No longer."

Philip, who also lived in Bethsaida, the home of Andrew and Peter, seeks out his brother Nathanael, and tells him he has found the Messiah, the long expected one who was to come and save broken and scattered Israel, in the person of a man, Jesus, from Nazaret. "Nazaret!" exclaims Nathanael, and won-

deringly enquires, in the words of a proverb, "Can any good thing come out of Nazaret?" "Come and see," replies Philip.

As Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, He remarked: "Here is a genuine Israelite! There is no guile in him."

"How do you know me?" exclaimed Nathanael.

"When you were under that fig-tree, before ever Philip called you, I saw you," responded Jesus.

What convinced Nathanael, in these words of the Nazarene, we can only guess. What was Nathanael doing under that fig-tree? Praying? Meditating? Whatever it was, it was enough, and Nathanael cried out:

"Rabbi, you are the son of God, you are the King of Israel!"

In this little incident two more brothers among the twelve stand clearly limned before our eyes.

Ray Palmer, in a poem on the text, "When you were under that fig-tree, I saw you," pictures Nathanael praying:

"I saw thee when, as twilight fell,
And evening lit her fairest star,
Thy footsteps sought yon quiet dell,
The world's confusion left afar.

"I saw thee from that sacred spot
With firm and peaceful soul depart;
I, Jesus, saw thee,—doubt it not,—
And read the secrets of thy heart!"

Another pair of brothers, James and John, sons of Zebedaeus, fishermen of Galilee, we know well. They were strong, brawny-armed, brave, dashing young men, who had earned the name, "Sons of Thunder." Their mother thought them equal to the two chief places in the restored kingdom, one on each side of the king; and they shared her opinion. One of these brothers, John, Jesus loved above all his followers. He it was who understood Jesus soonest and best. He leaned on the Master's breast at the last supper. His name is attached to the fourth gospel, though probably it was composed too late to have been written even in his advanced age. He is by some supposed to have written the book called "Revelation."

He is the only one of the apostles who did not die a violent death; and tradition goes that in his later life he was bishop of Ephesus and the surrounding cities of Asia Minor. It is said that when ninety years old, or thereabouts, his hair and beard white as snow, and when he was too feeble to walk, young men would bear him in an arm-chair into the church-assembly, and, stretching forth his palsied hands in blessing, the aged apostle would falter always the same words:

"Little children, love one another!"

Whether this story is true or not, it is in keeping with what we know of John.

The other Son of Thunder, James, is, as one might expect, the first martyr. He died in Jerusalem in the early days of the church. Herod slew him with the sword.

Only three others of the twelve, making nine in all,

are clear in our minds. Matthew Levi is one of these, the tax-gatherer, who immediately upon being chosen made a great feast in his house for Jesus. Important men in Capharnahum accepted his invitation—Pharisees and scribes; so in spite of the fact that he was a hated tax-gatherer he stood high in the community so far as mere prestige was concerned. He was the first to write down the words of Christ into a document which lies at the base of the gospel called Matthew's gospel. That document of the speeches of Jesus, known as "The Logia of Matthew," may have been made from memory, or it may even have been written from shorthand notes. Matthew Levi, therefore, possessed a degree of culture and a certain amount of initiative.

Judas Iscariot, the betrayer, the traitor, stands out clearly in the picture, a materialist, a money-grabber, ruthless and unscrupulous. All attempts to excuse his action by urging that he merely desired to drive Jesus, in spite of himself, to take up arms and assume the government, only defeat themselves. He is the forbidding figure in the group—the fly in the amber ointment.

One other remains, Thomas, the skeptic, the doubter, who did not and could not understand Jesus, but who, on one occasion in Peroea, when it seemed as if the Master was marching to certain death, said, "Come, let us go with him, that we may die with him." Phlegmatic, slow in mental processes, unable to believe until he had put his fingers into the nail-prints and his hand into the spear-wound, Thomas nevertheless knew how to love and in the end to die for that love. Doubtless

it could be said of Thomas, as Tennyson said of his dear friend, Arthur Hallam:

"He fought his doubts, and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the specters of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length,

"To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone."

Nine of the twelve, then, the New Testament sketches for us in outlines that render their figures familiar for all time. Three others it is content to leave more or less dim and shadowy. Would any other documents, nearly so brief, have done so well?

The list of the twelve apostles, the cabinet of the Master, may not mean a great deal to the modern mind, unless one has become familiar with their personalities; but having learned to know these men, the roll becomes a source of deep interest (Matthew X: 2-4).

"These are the names of the twelve apostles: first Simon (who is called Peter) and Andrew his brother, James the son of Zebedaeus and John his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew the tax-gatherer, James the son of Alphaeus and Lebbaeus whose surname is Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him."

In the choosing of the twelve Jesus reveals himself. He shows himself human in the best sense of that word. Friendship plays a large part in his selection; for he was acquainted with these fishermen. Two of them, Andrew and John, knew him before, as the narrative makes fairly clear when the Baptist pointed him out to them, and they followed him. They, in turn, introduced him to their brothers. We know, too, that he frequented the neighborhood of Bethsaida and Capharnahum, where these fishermen worked. Friendship, not expediency, seemed to weigh with him.

His democracy is equally evident in the choice. He sought no man because of his station. He chose men for what they were, not for what they had or for what other men thought of them. The courage of his choosing is evident. There is clearly no purpose of conciliation toward the influential elements of society. He disregards haughty public opinion and makes his intimates of those whom the powerful would scorn.

His wisdom, too, is amply justified, as the centuries have shown. He was not unwise even in the selection of the betrayer, Judas, and the denier, Simon. Such men were necessary in working out his purpose. As for ten of these men, their martyrdom reveals that he could not have secured greater souls among the high and mighty of the earth. Moreover, his sympathy is apparent, his fellow feeling with all sorts and conditions of men.

They are an unexpected company, these apostles, not men of "light and leading" according to the standards of their day. Most of them are men of the out-of-doors, handworkers, Galileans far from the seat of

government. Rustics, bearded, muscled,—they excited the derision and contempt of the rulers. All these men proved great souls except one; and he, a traitor. All the rest died martyrs to the cause but one, John the evangelist, who lived to advanced age. Some of them developed into great preachers, missionaries, religious statesmen; and all have places in history. They left old battered boats, patched and mended nets, for—immortality.

Chapter V

THE POETRY OF JESUS

Jesus is not so much the poet, to us, as the saint, the prophet, the trenchant moral teacher. So absorbed are we in his message that we lose sight of the garb in which it is clad. The sheer beauty escapes our attention. None the less, a prophet, a saint, must also be a poet. The prophets of Israel were poets with a keen sense of the romantic in human life, an appreciation of the musical in nature. The same sense of the harmonies rings in the speech of Christ.

Music sounds in his words, and a sense of music throbs in the least expected moments in his speech. To some, words are notes; to others they are mere counters, like beads on a string. One cannot acquire much of the feeling for music in words; it is born or not born in us. Two people may speak the same thought; and one will make it chime, while the other will merely utter it. There is no analyzing the difference. Rhyme and meter are not essential; for prose may ring and sing as well as metrical forms of composition. John Ruskin could make prose musical; so could Robert Louis Stevenson; most of Walt Whitman is truly musical prose. Thus Victor Hugo sings in his address on Voltaire and alludes to the power of well-chosen and chiming words when he refers to Voltaire's own gift in the expression: "That which has the lightness of the wind and the power of the thunderbolt—a pen."

The sense of music in Jesus' words survives, in translation, from one language to another. Musical in the Greek in which his words live, musical in the Aramaic in which no doubt they were first spoken, they are musical still in English or any other language into which they may have been translated.

Listen to the plaintive strain in this, the favorite passage, perhaps, and the most comforting in the whole Bible, to the largest number of men and women (Matthew XI: 28-30):

" 'Come to me, all who are labouring and burdened,
and I will refresh you.
Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I
am gentle and humble in heart, and you will
find your souls refreshed; my yoke is kindly
and my burden light.' "

He calls upon us here not to take a burden upon our necks, but to share our burdens with him by putting our heads into his yoke that he may help us to bear. He does not take away our burdens, to be sure; he even adds burdens; but he helps us to bear them. The very words are as sweet as the notes of a wood-wind instrument.

Another reassuring passage is John fourteen, in which Jesus teaches that loved ones "fallen asleep" are not lost to us:

" 'Let not your hearts be disquieted; you believe—believe in God and also in me. In my Father's house there are many abodes; were it not so, would I have

told you I was going to prepare a place for you? And when I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me, so that you may be where I am. And you know the way to where I am going.' 'Lord,' said Thomas, 'we do not know where you are going, and how are we to know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the real and living way: no one comes to the Father except by means of me. If you knew me, you would know my Father, too. You know him now and you have seen him.' "

In addition to this general sense of harmony, our Master possesses and employs also the technique of the poet. His words often fall into the parallelism of Hebrew poetry, the contrasts and antitheses. For their content, his deliverances must have startled his hearers; and for their manner, charmed those who listened. There are the beatitudes, the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew five:

"So when he saw the crowds, he went up the hill and sat down; his disciples came up to him and he opened his lips and began to teach them. He said:

" 'Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit!
the Realm of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are the mourners!
they will be consoled.
Blessed are the humble!
they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for goodness!
they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful!
they will find mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart!
they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers!
they will be ranked sons of God.
Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of goodness!
the Realm of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are you when men denounce you and persecute you and utter all manner of evil against you for my sake; rejoice and exult in it, for your reward is rich in heaven; that is how they persecuted the prophets before you.' "

There appear in these verses the favorite forms of expression of Hebrew poets; and those who listened to him were well aware that they were hearing, not merely moral precepts of originality, but also poetry, chaste and delicate.

The love of nature and the appreciation of it appears in Jesus' words. He constantly turns to the natural beauty about him for his illustrations, renders his speech vibrant with color, rugged with rock or storm, according to his purpose. His daintiest and most pointed allusions no doubt came to him on the moment, caught on the wing, from what he saw immediately round him. He sees and at once uses the sower sowing his seed, the lilies flowering in the valley, the mustard plant with birds in its branches, the fish glinting through the waves of the sea.

It is difficult to find in human language words more

beautiful than his appeal to the lilies in the Sermon on the Mount. No doubt these flowers lay spread at his feet, carpeting the valley, even as they may be seen in the spring of the year to-day on the plains of Esdraelon and of Sharon. Every traveler in Palestine remembers the flowers which in the spring run riot over the plains, valleys, water's edge and hillsides. There are no poppies like the poppies of the Near East.

> "In Flanders fields the poppies grow
> Between the crosses, row on row."

In Palestine, however, they grow everywhere, ten for every one in Flanders fields. Round the Lake of Galilee and bordering the Jordan, the oleanders bloom in a profusion not known in our western world. And the orange-blossom perfume that wafts over the waves at Joppa—who that has inhaled it can ever forget it? The anemone and the acacia, the wistaria and the bougainvillaea of the Mediterranean countries, beside a thousand species of small and shrinking flowers that hide beneath the grasses of the Holy Land, these all attest the genial skies of the Near East. Jesus seems aware of the presence of these flowers; and no doubt he had them in mind and perhaps just under his eye when he spoke the gentle words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew VI: 28-34):

> " 'And why should you trouble over clothing?
> Look how the lilies of the field grow;
> they neither toil nor spin,
> and yet, I tell you, even Solomon in all his grandeur was never robed like one of them.

Now if God so clothes the grass of the field which
blooms to-day and is thrown to-morrow into
the furnace, will not he much more clothe you?
O men, how little you trust him! Do not be
troubled, then, and cry, "What are we to eat?"
or "what are we to drink?" or "how are we to be
clothed?" (pagans make all that their aim in
life) for your heavenly Father knows quite well
you need all that. Seek God's Realm and his
goodness, and all that will be yours over and
above.
So do not be troubled about to-morrow;
to-morrow will take care of itself.
The day's own trouble is quite enough for the day.' "

The conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount has so impressed itself upon human remembrance as to have passed into a proverb. To "build one's house upon the sand" is now a household word, two thousand years after the figure was devised.

" 'Now, every one who listens to these words of mine
and acts upon them will be like a sensible man
who built his house on rock. The rain came
down, the floods rose, the winds blew and beat
upon that house, but it did not fall, for it was
founded on rock. And every one who listens
to these words of mine and does not act upon
them will be like a stupid man who built his
house on sand. The rain came down, the
floods rose, the winds blew and beat upon that
house, and down it fell—with a mighty crash.'

"When Jesus finished his speech, the crowds were astounded at his teaching; for he taught them like an authority, not like their own scribes."

The intimacy of spirit between the Master and his disciples, as well as the tie existing among all his followers, is set forth in a comparison taken from one of the commonest sights which his hearers beheld daily. The Story of the Vine and the Branches has entwined itself, as John records it, in the beginning of his fifteenth chapter, in the hearts of all readers of the New Testament:

" 'I am the real Vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser; he cuts away any branch on me which is not bearing fruit, and cleans every branch which does bear fruit, to make it bear richer fruit. You are already clean, by the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I remain in you; just as a branch cannot bear fruit by itself, without remaining on the vine, neither can you, unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He who remains in me, as I in him, bears rich fruit (because apart from me you can do nothing). If any one does not remain in me he is thrown aside like a branch and he withers up; then the branches are gathered and thrown into the fire to be burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, then ask whatever you like and you shall have it. As you bear rich fruit and prove yourselves my disciples, my Father is glorified.' "

"To glorify God and enjoy Him forever," which has been considered the chief end of man, is here declared by our Master to be entirely possible and even necessary.

In the ninth chapter of Mark, he uses that form of cadence we call the refrain—a recurring expression, like an echo.

" 'If your hand is a hindrance to you, cut it off:
better be maimed and get into Life,
than keep your two hands and go to Gehenna, to the fire that is never quenched.
If your foot is a hindrance to you, cut it off:
better get into Life a cripple,
than keep your two feet and be thrown into Gehenna.
If your eye is a hindrance to you, tear it out:
better to get into God's Realm with one eye,
than keep your two eyes and be thrown into Gehenna,
where their worm never dies and the fire is never put out.' "

Among the poems of the Master must be cited the two prayers he has left behind in written form. First there is that for his disciples in the seventeenth of John, where he prays among other things:

" 'May they all be one! As thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, so may they be in us—that the world may believe thou hast sent me.' "

Next there is that dainty, delicate, and yet strong bit of devotional literature which we call "The Lord's Prayer," found in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew six:

" 'Our Father in heaven,
thy name be revered,
thy Reign begin,
thy will be done
on earth as in heaven!
give us to-day our bread for the morrow,
and forgive us our debts
as we ourselves have forgiven our debtors,
and lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.' "

Who taught Jesus poetry? It must have been born in him, handed down from that far ancestor who was in his day the Sweet Singer of Israel. He must have steeped himself in it as he listened to the reading from the sacred rolls of the Scriptures in the synagogue, or as he stood brooding on the cliffs near his home looking away across the Plain of Esdraelon at his feet to misty Carmel, Tabor, or the hills of Samaria. Born with a love of musical words, doubtless he intensified it by playing on the chords of memory and practicing, perhaps all unconsciously, in the solitude of his own soul, this greatest of all the arts.

Chapter VI

SHORT STORIES OF JESUS

People never get so old or so sophisticated that they cannot profit by an apt story skillfully told. Some of the greatest minds have found the anecdote, the short story, the parable, convenient for enforcing and illuminating truth. They have deliberately used it to stimulate flagging interest or to ease too great tension. Abraham Lincoln, in our own country, showed himself a master in its argumentative use; Aesop, in Ancient Greece; Dean Swift and John Bunyan, in the British Isles.

The Hebrews did not seem greatly given to the anecdote, or parable. Their scriptures contain few of them; so that Jesus in the use of the story runs a new road of his own. There is in the Old Testament, in Judges nine, but one story, brief, and designed to convey a moral lesson, which almost challenges comparison with the parables of Christ. The trees choose the bramble to reign over them, because the fig, the vine, and the olive refuse the honor. It still applies in politics.

It is no easy task to compose short stories; the shorter the tale, the greater the skill required. In all times the story-teller has been in great request; and much of the world's best literature came first into being in the form of narratives told or sung by campfires, in castle-halls, or round cottage-hearths by stroll-

ing minstrels or by wise old seers. Even in these modern days successful raconteurs attract large hearings.

A young teacher may run too much to anecdote and illustration; an old one, too much to abstract truth. A just balance between these two extremes is not easy to maintain. Jesus places before the people profound and abstract thought; but he never fails to illuminate it and make it glow by means of concrete imagery and anecdote.

He selects his topics from the life he sees about him, and does not go afield into strange places for them. He looks upon the farms and pasture lands, into the homes and hearts of the people, and draws his material from these convincing sources. What we call "human interest" throbs in all his discourse, especially in his parables. He loves nature and adorns his talk with the white of the lily, the crimson of the poppy, the rainbow of the pearl, the silver reflection of the fish darting through translucent waters. In this regard, he stands in marked contrast to St. Paul, who seems never to see these beauties of nature, but illustrates only from markets, games, military life, and the crowded cities of men.

Confronting the mass of faces, some eager, some stolid, some sneering and hostile, some sober and thoughtful, Jesus casts about for a figure or a story by which to illustrate the responsibility of the hearer. He wishes to show that all the burden in moral crises does not rest upon him, the teacher; but much rests upon them, the listeners. He wants to drive home to their hearts that they must take heed how they hear.

Seeing a farmer at work, therefore, upon a neighboring hill, he points to him, broadcasting his grain upon the prepared land. Fancy how vivid and concrete must have been the impression upon eyes and minds before him. (Matthew XIII: 3-9.)

THE STORY OF THE SOWER

"He spoke at some length to them in parables, saying: 'A sower went out to sow, and as he sowed some seeds fell on the road and the birds came and ate them up. Some other seeds fell on stony soil where they had not much earth, and shot up at once because they had no depth of soil; but when the sun rose they got scorched and withered away because they had no root. Some other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. Some other seeds fell on good soil and bore a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirtyfold. He who has an ear, let him listen to this.' "

In explaining the story he declares that part of his purpose in using the parable is to sift out the discerning, the quick-witted, the open-hearted, from the slow, indifferent and even hostile hearers. He wants his message to reach those ready to hear and accept it, and to miss those who would reject it.

The great message of Jesus may be comprehended under the one head, The Kingdom of God, or better the Realm of God. He strives, therefore, by picture and story, to carry to the imaginations of the people some clear conception of that elusive idea, that "be-

loved community," that unity of all mankind. The striving, however, is not evident. The art, because fine, seems easy. Story after story he tells to show the inestimable value of the Realm of God. That Realm is the most precious possession. Once to accept it and to obtain from it a peace that is more valuable than anything else in the world is to find a solution of the perplexed problem of life. Jesus therefore compares it to buried treasure, always fascinating to those who hear of it, and to a pearl of the greatest price.

" 'The Realm of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field; the man who finds it hides it and in his delight goes and sells all he possesses and buys that field.

" 'Again, the Realm of heaven is like a trader in search of fine pearls; when he finds a single pearl of high price, he is off to sell all he possesses and buy it.' "

If one loses this invaluable possession, peace of mind, ease of conscience, goes with it. Life is upset. It is as if one had lost the dearest thing one had; and Jesus brings home to his hearers the utter helplessness that one feels who had lost such a loved article. The coins of dowry, which women of the East wear, gold or silver, about their foreheads, mean much more to them than so much legal tender. They mean home, love, children, the assured status of a woman who has found her destiny in the world. To lose one is a calamity beside which the modern western woman's loss of all her diamonds would be but trivial. (Luke XV:8.)

"'Or again, suppose a woman has ten shillings. If she loses one of them, does she not light a lamp and scour the house and search carefully till she find it? And when she finds it she gathers her women friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me for I have found the shilling I lost." So, I tell you there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over a single sinner who repents.'"

In what a delicate way in the last sentence the Master refers to God. He does not say joy among the angels, but in the presence of the angels; and who is in the presence of the angels but God?

For the men as well as the women who listened to him, Jesus had a story just as incisive. Many of these men were shepherds; and even the others had intimately to do with shepherds and their flocks. The parable of the shepherd and his lost sheep is a companion piece to the Lost Coin, and is especially apposite, in view of the fact that the rulers and the ultra-respectables of society declared themselves greatly shocked that Jesus had so much to do with tax-gatherers and outcasts. There is irony in the concluding sentence. (Luke XV: 4-7.)

"'Which of you with a hundred sheep, if he loses one, does not leave the ninety-nine in the desert and go after the lost one till he finds it? When he finds it he puts it on his shoulders with joy, and when he gets home he gathers his friends and neighbours: "Rejoice with me," he says to them, "for I have found the sheep I lost." . . . So, I tell you, there is joy in

the presence of the angels of God over a single sinner who repents.' "

Jesus sometimes speaks words or tells stories that have a smile in them. The perversity of humanity must, at times, sorely have tried his patience; but instead of showing irritation, he half-laughingly reduces the obstinacy of men to an absurdity, as in his illustration of the children in the marketplace. Humanity, slow to take new views, at times stubbornly balks. It will do neither one thing nor another.

" 'To what then shall I compare the men of this generation?
What are they like?
Like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,
"We piped to you and you would not dance,
we lamented and you would not weep."
For John the Baptist has come, eating no bread and drinking no wine,
and you say, "He has a devil";
the Son of man has come eating and drinking,
and you say, "Here is a glutton and a drunkard,
a friend of taxgatherers and sinners!"
Nevertheless, Wisdom is vindicated by all her children.' "

These stubborn fellows would play neither funeral nor wedding. They refused to play at all, but only sulked.

A very clear and plain instance of humor is found

in his short story concerning the excuses men made for not doing their duty by the Realm of God. When the king made a marriage supper and invited guests, one made excuse that he had bought a piece of ground and must go and see it; another said he had purchased oxen and must go try them; another, that he had married a wife and could not come.

How good a business man is one who buys ground and then goes to look at it? How sensible is the man who buys oxen and then goes to test, or try, them? The third excuse is the lamest of all; for what place so appropriate to take a bride as to a wedding-feast? Evidently, these are all laughable subterfuges; and we may be very sure that Jesus' hearers enjoyed with him the humor of it all.

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

The same discernment of motive in human nature is found in the story of the Good Samaritan. Those who pass by on the other side, refusing to help the wounded man, do so not out of sheer cruelty and indifference, but through fear or through anxiety. The priest is hurrying, no doubt, to Jerusalem, with the purpose of offering sacrifices, and does not wish to soil hands or clothing with blood, which would render him ceremonially unclean and so prevent his entrance to the temple. One should read this story remembering also that if there was anybody a Samaritan hated with all his soul, it was a Jew; and if there was anybody a Jew loathed from the bottom of his heart, it was a Samaritan.

The noblest view from Jerusalem is the plunging prospect from the Eastern walls or from the shoulder of the Mount of Olives down the rocky gorges to the blue waters of the Dead Sea. It seems but a half-hour's walk to that salt lake, blue as indigo, the bluest blue ever reflected on the human retina; and one would think he could step down there for a plunge and back again for breakfast; but it is thirty miles away. The road to Jericho, in the Dead Sea valley, steep and rocky, in Jesus' day and even down to the British régime, has ever been infested with robbers. Half-way down, on a bit of a plateau that widens out from the cañons, is the Good Samaritan inn, where all travelers pause for refreshment—doubtless the very site of the inn that Jesus made forever famous, and where doubtless he, too, had paused many times in his toilsome journeys. (Luke X: 30-36.)

"'A man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among robbers who stripped and belaboured him and then went off leaving him half-dead. Now it so chanced that a priest was going down the same road, but on seeing him he went past on the opposite side. So did a Levite who came to the spot; he looked at him but passed on the opposite side. However a Samaritan traveller came to where he was and felt pity when he saw him; he went to him, bound his wounds up, pouring oil and wine into them, mounted him on his own steed, took him to an inn, and attended to him. Next morning he took out a couple of shillings and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, "Attend to him, and if you are put to any extra expense I will

refund you on my way back." Which of these three men in your opinion, proved a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?' "

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED

No daintier story is told by Jesus, no more thoroughly oriental a tale, than one which we might call, "The Light That Failed," better known as the "Parable of the Ten Virgins." The jingle of bracelets and anklets, the shimmer of silken garments and veils, the henna of dyed finger-nails and eyelids, the crash and beat of oriental music, all fill the atmosphere of this classic story.

The leisurely East makes much of festivals of all kinds—weddings and funerals. We saw little children at Cana, in Galilee, playing funeral in the narrow streets where Jesus had attended the marriage feast. A wedding takes days to celebrate, with many presents, torches and lamps at night; and everybody in the community takes a part.

The coming of the bridal couple to their future home, where the wedding-feast occurs, is always a surprise. Nobody knows beforehand whether it will be by day or by night. Those who wish to partake of the feast go out to meet the happy pair, and must be on the watch and prepared, whether in the daylight or in the darkness.

The five sensible maids of honor and the five stupid ones, in the story of Jesus, the former ready and the latter unprepared, face together the surprise moment, and for the stupid ones the light fails:

"Then all the maidens rose and trimmed their lamps. The stupid said to the sensible, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the sensible replied, 'No, there may not be enough for us and for you. Better go to the dealers and buy for yourselves.' Now while they were away buying oil, the bridegroom arrived; those maidens who were ready accompanied him to the marriage-banquet, and the door was shut. Afterwards the rest of the maidens came and said, 'Oh sir, oh sir, open the door for us!' but he replied, 'I tell you frankly, I do not know you.' Keep on the watch then, for you know neither the day nor the hour."

This story is the foundation for Tennyson's plaintive lines, sung by the little novice to Queen Guinevere:

"Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.

"No light had we: for that we do repent;
And learning this, the bridegroom will relent.
Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.

"No light; so late! and dark and chill the night!
O, let us in, that we may find the light!
Too late, too late! Ye cannot enter now.

"Have we not heard the bridegroom is so sweet?
O, let us in, though late, to kiss his feet!
No, no, too late! Ye cannot enter now."

THE LOST SON

What shall be said of the story of the Lost, or Prodigal, Son? How shall we approach it—the most universally true story ever told? Universality of appeal is the test of great art. This story is found in Luke fifteen:

"He also said: 'There was a man who had two sons, and the younger said to his father, "Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me." So he divided his means among them. Not many days later, the younger son sold off everything and went abroad to a distant land, where he squandered his means in loose living. After he had spent his all, a severe famine set in throughout that land, and he began to feel in want; so he went and attached himself to a citizen of that land, who sent him to his fields to feed swine. And he was fain to fill his belly with the pods the swine were eating; no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, "How many hired men of my father have more than enough to eat, and here am I perishing of hunger! I will be up and off to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I don't deserve to be called your son any more; only make me like one of your hired men.'" So he got up and went off to his father. But when he was still far away his father saw him and felt pity for him and ran to fall upon his neck and kiss him. The son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I don't deserve to be called your son

any more." But the father said to his servants, "Quick, bring the best robe and put it on him, give him a ring for his hand and sandals for his feet, and bring the fatted calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for my son here was dead and he has come to life, he was lost and he is found." So they began to make merry. Now his elder son was out in the field, and as he came near the house he heard music and dancing; so, summoning one of the servants, he asked what this meant. The servant told him, "Your brother has arrived, and your father has killed the fatted calf because he has got him back safe and sound." This angered him, and he would not go in. His father came out and tried to appease him, but he replied, "Look at all the years I have been serving you! I have never neglected any of your orders, and yet you have never given me so much as a kid, to let me make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours arrives, after having wasted your means with harlots, you kill the fatted calf for him!" The father said to him, "My son, you and I are always together, all I have is yours. We could not but make merry and rejoice, for your brother here was dead and has come to life again, he was lost but he has been found." ' "

Chapter VII

SOME BEAUTIFUL MIRACLES OF JESUS

Whatever be the opinion regarding the fact of the miracles in the New Testament, none the less the accounts of some of them are undoubtedly beautiful.

Moreover, a scientific, and therefore a somewhat skeptical, age like this should be slow about brushing aside all the miracles of Christ. After all, a miracle is simply a happening which passes our ability to explain; and such things are occurring increasingly round us all the time. The radio, the submersible ship, the aircraft, the psychological healings, are all matters that a few years since we could not have explained. Some of them we cannot even yet explain.

It is well to be careful therefore, how, in dealing with such a personality as that of Jesus, we reach too hasty conclusions regarding his limitations. Most of us would admit that his miracles, though they proved much apparently to his own time, are without evidential value to our age, while his words, his death, himself, are all-important. Nevertheless we are narrow and dogmatic when we waive away all accounts of the marvelous in his doings; just as much so as if we declare the whole structure of Christianity to be in danger, if one doubt be cast on any or all of the miracles.

Particularly is it hazardous to refuse credence to his healing miracles, when many just as startling are

happening to-day through the increased knowledge of psycho-therapeutics. Jesus, in all his utterances, as well as in his dealings with men and women, reveals himself as a master psychologist. Why is it incredible that he should have been an adept psychiatrist? One need not discount modern science in recognizing mysterious powers in Jesus that we have not yet fathomed. Neither need we accept as literal facts such manifestly legendary stories as the swine possessed, the fig-tree cursed and withered, or the water turned into wine. Let them go for what they are worth; where they have beauty we may enjoy it. But many of the cases of healing have become much more credible of recent years, since Sigmund Freud and his followers, with many exaggerations and vagaries, have unearthed the realm of the subconscious, or the unconscious, in human life. The most beautiful phase of the healing work of Christ is his compassion for the suffering multitudes, scattered, as he said, like sheep without a shepherd, and his recognition of the intimate relations between bodily and spiritual health and welfare.

Our own age is just beginning to catch up with him in this regard and to recognize the impossibility of separating the body and the mind, or soul. "A pain in the mind is often a pain in the body." It was the duty of Jesus, as it is of his followers, to alleviate both.

In such a spirit of open-mindedness then, let us read certain accounts of the marvelous deeds of Christ to find the truth and beauty in them. Truth, after all, is more important than fact.

The first miracle is one of the most beautiful. It

is cited in the marriage-service in the Book of Common Prayer, and is the subject of that line of Richard Crashaw's which won the prize for the best essay on the miracle at Cana:

"The Conscious water saw its God and blushed."

The story reveals the genial social qualities of Christ, his obedience to his mother, and his sympathy for even the most negligible predicaments of his fellow mortals. John, his closest friend, is the one who records it, in his second chapter:

"Two days later a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee; the mother of Jesus was present, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. As the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to him, 'They have no wine.' 'Woman,' said Jesus, 'what have you to do with me? My time has not come yet.' His mother said to the servants, 'Do whatever he tells you.' Now six stone water-jars were standing there, for the Jewish rites of 'purification,' each holding about twenty gallons. Jesus said, 'Fill up the jars with water.' So they filled them to the brim. Then he said, 'Now draw some out, and take it to the manager of the feast.' They did so; and when the manager of the feast tasted the water which had become wine, not knowing where it had come from (though the servants who had drawn it knew), he called the bridegroom and said to him, 'Everybody serves the good wine first, and then the poorer wine after people have drunk freely; you have kept the

good wine till now.' Jesus performed this, the first of his Signs, at Cana in Galilee, thereby displaying his glory; and his disciples believed in him."

A pathetic picture Mark draws for us, in his fifth chapter, of a shrinking woman who comes behind Jesus, hoping to avoid attention, and touches the hem of his garment. On account of the nature of her malady she desires to escape notice. Phillips Brooks preached a great sermon on this miracle, entitling it, "The Venture of Faith."

"And there was a woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years—she had suffered a great deal under a number of doctors and had spent all her means but was none the better; in fact she was rather worse. She heard about Jesus, got behind him in the crowd, and touched his robe; 'If I can touch even his clothes,' she said to herself, 'I will recover.' And at once the hemorrhage stopped, and she felt in her body that she was cured of her complaint. Jesus was at once conscious that some healing virtue had passed from him, so he turned round in the crowd and asked, 'Who touched my clothes?' His disciples said to him, 'You see the crowd are pressing round you, and yet you ask, "Who touched me?" ' But he kept looking round to see who had done it, and the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came forward in fear and trembling and fell down before him, telling him all the truth. He said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be free from your complaint.' "

Another story both in Matthew's gospel and in Mark's, full of the human element, is laid in "his own city," Capharnahum, so-called, no doubt, because it was the nearest large city to his home at Nazaret, and his frequent resort. The fallen Roman columns still lying on its site, at the northern end of the Lake of Galilee, mutely tell of a once proud metropolis. According to Mark, his friends bring the sick man to Jesus and, finding the Master in a house teaching, surrounded by a great crowd, they break up the roof and let down the bed on which the patient lies. The fragile character of oriental roofs makes their removal, as in this story, easily possible. The enterprise of the four friends in the narrative strikes a responsive chord in our hearts. The bickering of the Master's enemies is strictly in character; and the possibly sinful origin of the man's disease, if not known then, is all too well known now.

The story according to Matthew adds other striking details (Matthew IX: 1-8):

"So he embarked in the boat and crossed over to his own town. There a paralytic was brought to him, lying on a pallet; and when Jesus saw the faith of the bearers he said to the paralytic, 'Courage, my son! your sins are forgiven.' Some scribes said to themselves, 'The man is talking blasphemy!' Jesus saw what they were thinking and said, 'Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is the easier thing, to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Rise and walk"? But to let you see the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins'—he then said to the paralytic,

'Get up, lift your pallet, and go home.' And he got up and went home. The crowds who saw it were awed and glorified God for giving such power to men."

Among the scourges of the East, perhaps the worst of all is leprosy, because of its contagious character, and the necessary isolation, loneliness, and privation of the sufferers. As one sees these poor creatures by country roadsides in the East, or hovering in the environs of the cities begging, his heart beats with an unforgettable pain of sympathy. In the center of Damascus is a high wall enclosing the leper settlement, and one may see the inmates only through iron bars. The sight is piteous.

This disease is frequently and aptly used as a figure for sin. Luke, in the seventeenth chapter, tells of ten lepers whom Jesus healed. Only one of them, and he a hated Samaritan, had grace and gratitude enough to come and thank him. It is easy for us, not only to forget our sufferings, but also to forget the good physicians who relieve us.

"On entering one village he was met by ten lepers who stood at a distance and lifted up their voice, saying, 'Jesus, master, have pity on us.' Noticing them he said, 'Go and show yourselves to the priests.' And as they went away they were cleansed. Now one of them turned back when he saw he was cured, glorifying God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. So Jesus said, 'Were all the ten not cleansed? Where are the other nine? Was there

no one to return and give glory to God except this foreigner?' And he said to him, 'Get up and go, your faith has made you well.'"

Afflictions of the eyes are common to this day in the Orient. The glare of sunlight on sand, the dust, the myriad flies, and the nameless contagions that the East has no science to combat, contribute to the sum of blindness. Jesus, we are told, opened many blind eyes; but the tale of Bartimaeus of Jericho, with his persistence, his importunity, his faith, is perhaps the most touching of them all. Giving sight to the blind is so like giving light to darkened minds that the comparison is inevitable.

"Then they reached Jericho; and as he was leaving Jericho with his disciples and a considerable crowd, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, the blind beggar who sat beside the road, heard it was Jesus of Nazaret. So he started to shout, 'Son of David! Jesus! have pity on me.' A number of the people checked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, 'Son of David, have pity on me!' Jesus stopped and said, 'Call him.' Then they called the blind man and told him, 'Courage! Get up, he is calling you.' Throwing off his cloak he jumped up and went to Jesus. Jesus spoke to him and said, 'What do you want me to do for you?' The blind man said, 'Rabboni, I want to regain my sight.' Then Jesus said, 'Go, your faith has made you well;' and he regained his sight at once and followed Jesus along the road."

Chapter VIII

SOME EPIGRAMS OF JESUS

The literary art reaches its height, perhaps, in the shaping of short, sharp, and yet profound sentences that stick in the mind as if they were barbed. It requires less skill to convey a great idea in many and laborious words than to illuminate it with a sudden flash. It is not always the size of a picture that measures its greatness.

Jesus shows himself adept in the painting of miniatures. It may perhaps be asserted that he is remembered as much for his epigrams as for his longer parables and discourses. These packed sentences have found lodgment in millions of minds. Once heard they can never be forgotten.

The beatitudes at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in the fifth chapter of Matthew, already quoted under the head of the poetry of Jesus, have embedded themselves in the memories of men. They still sound paradoxical, extreme, almost unbelievable, although the world, after two thousand years, is gradually beginning to grasp their profound truth.

Then the Master makes the two apt comparisons: "You are the salt of the earth" and "You are the light of the world."

The positive character of his mission he could not state more happily and tersely than in this same chapter:

" 'Do not imagine I have come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfill.' "

The searching character of the Sermon on the Mount, its emphasis upon the motive as the test of the deed, its theme that what is within the heart matters, not what is in the ouward condition, bearing or action, cannot but impress one who reads its pithy sentences:

" 'You have heard how it used to be said, Do not commit adultery. But I tell you, any one who even looks with lust at a woman has committed adultery with her already in his heart.' "

He combats a number of wise sayings of the fathers of his race, putting in place of them wiser ones of his own:

"You have heard the saying, An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.
But I tell you, you are not to resist an injury:
whoever strikes you on the right cheek,
turn the other to him as well;
whoever wants to sue you for your shirt,
let him have your coat as well;
whoever forces you to go one mile,
go two miles with him;
give to the man who begs from you,
and turn not away from him who wants to borrow."

The sixth of Matthew amply demonstrates how certain sayings of Jesus have passed into proverbs, known by all of us from childhood, so that we speak them even while scarcely conscious of their origin.

"When you give alms,
make no flourish of trumpets like the hypocrites
in the synagogues and the streets,
so as to win applause from men;
I tell you truly, they do get their reward.
When you give alms,
do not let your left hand know what your right
hand is doing,
so as to keep your alms secret;
then your Father who sees what is secret will
reward you openly."

"For where your treasure lies,
your heart will lie there too."

"No man can serve two masters;
either he will hate one and love the other,
or else he will stand by the one and despise
the other—
you cannot serve both God and Mammon."

In the same chapter is a luminous comparison of the inward light that follows upon clearness and integrity of motive. Nothing could be more convincing to a people afflicted, as so many of these orientals were, with optical disease or defect:

"The eye is the lamp of the body:
so, if your Eye is generous,
the whole of your body will be illumined,
but if your eye is selfish,
the whole of your body will be darkened.
And if your very light turns dark,
then—what a darkness it is!"

He gives a new turn in the next chapter to the same idea, in the comparison of the splinter and the plank, or stake:

"'Why do you note the splinter in your brother's eye and fail to see the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, "Let me take out the splinter from your eye," when there lies the plank in your own eye?'"

He uses homely, concrete illustrations to convey spiritual truths, and with them introduces his golden rule:

"'Why, which of you, when asked by his son for a loaf, will hand him a stone?
Or, if he asks a fish, will you hand him a serpent?
Well, if for all your evil you know to give your children what is good,
how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him?
Well then, whatever you would like men to do to you, do just the same to them; that is the meaning of the Law and the prophets.'"

He leaves two images in our speech forever:

" 'Beware of false prophets; they come to you with
the garb of sheep but at heart they are ravenous
wolves.
You will know them by their fruit; do men gather
grapes from thorns or figs from thistles? No.' "

A certain scribe wanted to follow Jesus wherever he went. The Master answered him:

" 'The foxes have their holes,
the wild birds have their nests,
but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.' "

Another wanted to wait until he had buried his father:

" 'Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own
dead.' "

There is a fine irony in his answer to the Pharisees who criticize him for consorting with publicans and other outcasts:

" 'Those who are strong have no need of a doctor, but those who are ill . . . For I have not come to call just men but sinners.' "

The worldly wisdom and the felicity of utterance, in his instructions to the twelve whom he sent out on a mission, must have made deep impression on them:

"'I am sending you out like sheep among wolves;
so be wise like serpents and guileless like doves. . . .
Have no fear of those who kill the body but cannot
kill the soul:
rather fear Him who can destroy both soul and
body in Gehenna.
Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?
Yet not one of them will fall to the ground
unless your Father wills it. . . .
Every one who will acknowledge me before men,
I will acknowledge him before my Father
in heaven. . . .
"Do not imagine I have come to bring peace on
earth;
I have not come to bring peace but a
sword. . . .
"He who loves father or mother more than me
is not worthy of me;
he who loves son or daughter more than me
is not worthy of me: . . .
He who has found his life will lose it,
and he who loses his life for my sake will find it.'"

Vividly Jesus states a great economic and spiritual law:

"'For he who has, to him shall more be given and
richly given,
but whoever has not, from him shall be taken even
what he has.'"

Once after one of his discourses, he exclaims:

" 'I praise thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
for hiding all this from the wise and learned and revealing it to the simple-minded.' "

Accused by the Pharisees of doing his good works through the power of Satan, he replies:

" 'Any realm divided against itself comes to ruin,
any city or house divided against itself will never stand.' "

Then Matthew's account adds pointedly:

" 'He who is not with me is against me,
and he who does not gather with me scatters.' "

He further retorts against the hostility and envy of his enemies:

" 'For the mouth utters what the heart is full of.' "

Concerning the criticism that he violated the sabbath, Jesus replies with a great moral precept, applicable to all such questions:

"And he said to them, 'The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath:
so that the Son of man is Lord even over the sabbath.' "

Rejected by his own close neighbors, Jesus utters a proverb that has had world-wide recognition:

" 'A prophet never goes without honour except in his native place and in his home.' "

In answer to those who were absorbed in the observance of ritual, in ceremonial cleanness and uncleanness, watching what and how they ate, rather than what and how they did and spoke and thought, he declares:

" 'It is not what enters a man's mouth that defiles him, what defiles a man is what comes out of his mouth.' "

After Simon Peter has confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God, the Master makes a play upon Simon's name, comparing him to a rock (Petros), in a remarkable sentence:

> " 'Now I tell you, Peter is your name and on this rock I will build my church; the powers of Hades shall not succeed against it.' "

Upon every one of these texts, countless sermons have been preached, and the subjects are not even yet quite exhausted. Indeed most of these epigrams we still do not believe, or do not understand.

Chapter IX

MORE EPIGRAMS OF JESUS

In the sixteenth chapter of Matthew Jesus adds certain epigrams concerning the danger and the reward of following in his steps:

"Then Jesus said to his disciples, 'If any one wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and so follow me:

for whoever wants to save his life will lose it,
and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

What profit will it be if a man gains the whole world and forfeits his own soul? What will a man offer as an equivalent for his soul?' "

Jesus uttered many words which were then regarded as "hard sayings," and still may be so regarded:

" 'I tell you truly, if you had faith the size of a grain of mustard-seed, you could say to this hill, "Move from here to there," and remove it would; nothing would be impossible for you.' "

He uttered many which were tender:

" 'Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Realm of heaven.' "

" 'Let the children alone, do not stop them from coming to me; the Realm of heaven belongs to such as these.' "

Discussing marriage he offers a word that will probably remain forever in the Christian marriage service:

" 'So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What God has joined, then, man must not separate.' "

Concerning the dangers of riches he utters himself pointedly, even if hyperbolically:

" 'I tell you again, it is easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to get into the Realm of God. . . . This is impossible for men, but anything is possible for God.' "

Life does for us just what Jesus says it will, selects us, sifts us, chooses and rejects us:

" 'Many who are first shall be last, and many who are last shall be first."

The principle of choice is just what he says it is:

" 'Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of man has not come to be served but to serve,
and to give his life as a ransom for many.' "

In crossing swords with the Pharisees, his enemies, he declares our proper attitude toward church and state:

"'Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give God what belongs to God.'"

Discussing immortality he declares:

"'He is not a God of dead people but of living.'"

He sums up his ethical code:

"'You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and chief command. There is a second like it: you must love your neighbour as yourself. The whole Law and the prophets hang upon these two commands.'"

The twenty-third chapter of Matthew contains his eight terrible "woes," pronounced against the Pharisees. We quote two of them:

"'Woe to you, you impious scribes and Pharisees!
you tithe mint and dill and cummin,
and omit the weightier matters of the law,
justice and mercy and faithfulness;
these latter you ought to have practised—without
omitting the former.
Blind guides that you are,
filtering away the gnat and swallowing the camel!

Woe to you, you irreligious scribes and Pharisees!
you clean the outside of the cup and the plate,
but inside they are filled with your rapacity and
self-indulgence.' "

The twenty-fourth chapter is one of prediction commonly believed to refer to his second coming.

" 'Wherever the body lies,
there will the vultures gather. . . .
Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words
will never pass away. . . .
Then there will be two men in the field,
one will be taken and one will be left;
two women will be grinding at the millstone,
one will be taken and one will be left. . . .
There men will wail and gnash their teeth.' "

When he is anointed by a loving woman, from her alabaster box, and objection is made that the money involved should have been given to the poor, he replies:

" 'The poor you always have beside you, but you will not always have me.' "

The Lord's Supper is instituted in terse sentences that we still employ:

"As they were eating he took a loaf and after the blessing he broke it; then he gave it to the disciples saying, 'Take and eat this, it means my

body.' He also took a cup and after thanking God he gave it to them saying, 'Drink of it, all of you; this means my blood, the new covenant-blood, shed for many, to win the remission of their sins.' "

When Simon attacks Malchus and wounds him, Jesus rebukes Simon in words that have ever since proved true in human experience:

" 'Put your sword back into its place; all who draw the sword shall die by the sword.' "

There is much epigrammatic material in the gospel of John, and of a slightly different tone. A few instances will suffice to convey the distinction. In his talk with Nicodemus in the night, Jesus begins:

" 'Truly, truly I tell you, no one can see God's Realm unless he is born from above.' "

He continues with a delicate comparison:

" 'The wind blows where it wills; you can hear its sound, but you never know where it has come from or where it goes: it is the same with every one who is born of the spirit.' "

And a glowing antithesis:

" 'God did not send his Son into the world to pass sentence on it, but to save the world by him.' "

Another vivid contrast:

" 'For any one whose practices are corrupt loathes the light and will not come out into it, in case his actions are exposed, whereas any one whose life is true comes out into the light, to make it plain that his actions have been divinely prompted.' "

John the Baptist is cited in this same chapter as the author of a well-known epigram:

" 'He must wax, I must wane.' "

In the fourth chapter of John, Christ utters the aphorism:

" 'God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship him in Spirit and in reality.' "

He makes this startling comparison:

" 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to me will never be hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty again.' "

He states clearly and concisely the principle that religion has its origin in the will, not merely in the intellect:

" 'Any one who chooses to do his will, shall understand whether my teaching comes from God or whether I am talking on my own authority.' "

In the story about the woman caught in sin, and condemned under the Jewish law to death by stoning, Jesus reaches the conscience with a word:

" 'Let the innocent among you throw the first stone at her.' "

Here also he utters such telling phrases as these:

" 'I am the light of the world: he who follows me will not walk in darkness, he will enjoy the light of life. . . .

" 'You will understand the truth, and the truth will set you free. . . . Truly, truly I tell you, I have existed before Abraham was born.' "

Other epigrams illustrate, as almost all these sayings do, how familiar have become these pointed utterances of Christ:

" 'While daylight lasts, we must be busy with the work of God: night comes, when no one can do any work.' "

" 'The thief only comes to steal, to slay, and to destroy: I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.' "

The opening of the burial service of the church has long followed the words of Jesus concerning Lazarus:

" 'I am myself resurrection and life:
he who believes in me will live, even if he dies,

and no one who lives and believes in me will ever die.' "

Concerning his own death by hanging on the cross, he declares:

" 'But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.' "

Concerning the future life:

" 'Let not your hearts be disquieted; you believe—believe in God and also in me. In my Father's house there are many abodes; were it not so, would I have told you I was going to prepare a place for you?' "

Then he adds:

" 'Peace I leave to you, my peace I give to you; I give it not as the world gives its "Peace!" Let not your hearts be disquieted or timid.' "

He announces other universal principles:

" 'To lay life down for his friends, man has no greater love than that.' "

" 'And this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only real God, and him whom thou hast sent, even Jesus Christ.' "

Chapter X

JESUS DEALING WITH MEN

The work of an expert always attracts the eye and shows grace of movement, delicacy of touch, and no lost motion. If the materials with which he works are human beings, his management becomes doubly interesting. Jesus reveals his knowledge of men and his skill in dealing with them.

The love which he held for nature extended to human nature. He possessed what every great literary man must have, an understanding of his fellow men and a sympathy with them. Jesus, keenly alive to all the issues in human life, apparently delights in solving for men and women their perplexities.

The characters sketched by the evangelists stand out clearly upon the page and endure in human memory. They are the products of skillful narration; for little is ever told to describe them; they are left to picture themselves by word and action.

ZACCHAEUS, THE RICH OUTCAST

A publican, or tax-gatherer, held about the same position in society in Christ's day that a saloon-keeper once did in America, a bootlegger now, or a professional gambler. For a religious teacher or any one in good social standing, to be seen in his company shocked all beholders. Rome, the master oppressor, farmed out the taxes to the highest bidder; and in turn

the tax-contractor wrung from the people the most he could. Naturally the contractor and his employees were cordially hated. These were the publicans.

Something in the nature of this man Zacchaeus prompted a curiosity to see the Nazarene. Many a social outcast so desires to look from afar upon the great and good; for they are not all bad, or entirely bad, whom society ostracizes. The accusation "mere curiosity" suggests the pharisaical mind, then and now, as curiosity is one of the immortal attributes of humanity. Zacchaeus runs ahead of the mob surrounding Jesus, climbs a sycamore tree, in the "City of Palms," because he is short of stature, in order that he may see over the heads of taller men.

Eagerness, enthusiasm, enterprise, appear in the actions of this little man; yet not one of these qualities is directly mentioned in the story. Luke, the evangelist, tells of it, in his own vivid fashion, in chapter nineteen:

"Then he entered Jericho. And as he passed through it, there was a man called Zacchaeus, the head of the taxgatherers, a wealthy man, who tried to see what Jesus was like; but he could not, on account of the crowd—for he was small of stature. So he ran forward and climbed into a sycomore tree to get a sight of him, as he was to pass that road. But when Jesus reached the spot he looked up and said to him, 'Zacchaeus, come down at once, for I must stay at your house to-day.' He came down at once and welcomed him gladly. But when they saw this, every one began to mutter that he had gone to be the guest of a sinner.

So Zacchaeus stopped and said to the Lord, 'I will give the half of all I have, Lord, to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody I will give him back four times as much.' And Jesus said of him, 'To-day salvation has come to this house, since Zacchaeus here is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man has come to seek and save the lost.' "

It is unnecessary to call to the attention of the discerning the skill in this narrative. The words stand out from the page: "ran," "climbed," "at once," "gladly." At the dinner, as all reclined, Zacchaeus, moving about, "stopped," and his conscience spoke.

It is superfluous to ask the sympathetic to watch the behavior of Jesus throughout the brief story; how he recognizes a kindred spirit in the rich little man; how he sees the aspiration underneath the sordid, material exterior; how he meets with approbation the new resolution which the hard-fisted publican takes.

A MAN WRAPPED UP IN RICHES

The love which Jesus bore for human nature, even imperfect human nature, appears in the story of the rich young ruler who so enthusiastically came inquiring the road to salvation. Jesus loved him not for his wealth, not even for his youth. A man was a man to Christ regardless of exterior or place. This young man possessed a certain enthusiastic charm captivating to the Master in spite of the flaw in the inner life. Jesus looked into him, saw the ulcer beneath the fair surface, and with his unerring lancet pierced to it. Mark tells the tale (Mark X: 17-22):

"As he went out on the road a man ran up and knelt down before him. 'Good teacher,' he asked, 'what must I do to inherit life eternal?' Jesus said to him, 'Why call me "good"? No one is good, no one but God. You know the commands: do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and mother.' 'Teacher,' he said, 'I have observed all these commands from my youth.' Jesus looked at him and loved him. 'There is one thing you want,' he said, 'go and sell all you have; give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, take up the cross, and follow me.' But his face fell at that, and he went sadly away, for he had great possessions."

NICODEMUS, THE PHARISEE

A very different ruler, Nicodemus the Pharisee, for reasons of expediency, sought Jesus out by night. The colloquy that took place startles us by the ingenuity of Christ no less than by the profundity. He seems to possess a perfect insight into the Pharisaic mind and to discern that the wit of Nicodemus is only apparently, not really, slow. Nevertheless he shows no impatience or hostility, but treats the quibbler with courtesy and kindness as if he were altogether sincere. One has the feeling, before their talk is over, that all posing has vanished from Nicodemus. The tradition goes that Nicodemus became a Christian; certainly later on he spoke boldly in behalf of Christ.

"Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, who belonged to the Jewish authorities; he came one night

to Jesus and said, 'Rabbi, we know you have come from God to teach us, for no one could perform these Signs of yours unless God were with him.' Jesus replied, 'Truly, truly I tell you, no one can see God's Realm unless he is born from above.' Nicodemus said to him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother's womb over again and be born?' Jesus replied, 'Truly, truly I tell you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter God's Realm.'"

Jesus, recognizing the spiritual fitness of his hearer, begins this conversation on a high level and keeps it there. Nicodemus tries to fence and quibble, but Jesus brushes aside his interferences and questions with a firm courtesy, and pursues the even tenor of his high way of discussion. There is increasing respect and awe manifest in the bearing of Nicodemus. The aged rabbi bows before the spiritual wisdom of the young one, just as old India has, in our own time, bowed to the young seers, Gandhi and Tagore. It is not at all incredible that, even as tradition holds, Nicodemus ultimately became a Christian. The references made by Jesus at the close of this conversation to those who love evil not daring to come to the light, contain perhaps a courteous rebuke to his interlocutor for coming in the night time.

THOMAS, THE SKEPTIC AND HERO

Quite a different doubter and inquirer appears in that one of his own disciples whose name has become

the synonym for doubt—Thomas. And quite differently does Jesus treat him. We know Thomas well—slow-witted, heavy-handed, conservative, bucolic, but faithful. In the account of the raising of Lazarus, when the disciples reason with Jesus about going into the hotbed of dangers at Jerusalem, and when the Master sets his face like flint to go thither, it is this doubter of all others who cries:

"Let us also go, that we may die with him."

There are worse things than doubt. There are qualities that drown doubt; love is one of these. Thomas did not understand his Lord; did not claim to dissect him and say how much of him was human, how much divine; did not presume to define and tabulate him, or to put him into a dogma or a proposition; but he loved the Nazarene with a love ready to go to death, and that did finally go to the cross. Tennyson cries:

> "There lives more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds."

Consequently Jesus bears, in the tenderest fashion, with the slowness and hesitancy of Thomas. In the fourteenth chapter of John, when Jesus is trying to still the troubled hearts of the twelve after the announcement of his forthcoming death, Our Lord speaks tenderly to Thomas, and still later, after the resurrection, he treats Thomas with marked consideration.

"'Lord,' said Thomas at the last supper, 'we do not know where you are going, and how are we to know the way?' Jesus said to him, 'I am the real and living way; no one comes to the Father except by

means of me. If you knew me, you would know my Father too. You know him now and you have seen him.'"

SIMON PETER, LEADER OF THE TWELVE

Numerous other persons with whom Jesus dealt ought, of right, to come upon the scene in this chapter; but the four gospels cannot all be reproduced here. It is impossible, however, to pass over the outstanding character in the Master's retinue, the chiefest of the twelve, the rock apostle, Simon Peter.

Human and faulty, but warm and generous, he captures every imagination. He is the first named in all lists of the twelve. Later he sees the Master on the lake in the night and, stepping out of the boat, tries to walk to him on the water. He refuses to let the Master wash his feet at the passover supper; but when told that unless his feet be so washed he can have no part nor lot in the Realm of Heaven, he demands: "Not my feet only, but my hands and my head!" When Jesus informs the twelve that they will all desert him, Simon cries: "Though all forsake you, yet will not I!" Then he is told—unbelievable word—that before the cock crow twice he will deny his Lord thrice. When Jesus declares that he is going away where his disciples cannot follow him until later, Peter inquires eagerly: "Lord, why cannot I follow you now?" When Jesus is betrayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter draws a sword and strikes at the guards, wounding one; then before daybreak he curses and swears that he never knew the Galilean.

The bearing of Jesus towards Simon after the denial, the crucifixion, the resurrection, touches the reader. His repeated question to Simon, "Do you love me?" carries an accusing yet forgiving love that must have wrung tears from the rough fisherman's eyes. Jesus remembers Peter's boast that he would be faithful even if all these others went away, and asks Simon now: "Do you love me more than the others do?" It is John, "the beloved," the most intimate, disciple who tells this story, one of the most poignant of all the pathetic incidents in the Bible:

"Then after breakfast Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me more than the others do?' 'Why, Lord,' he said, 'you know I love you.' 'Then feed my lambs,' said Jesus. Again he asked him for the second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' 'Why, Lord,' he said, 'you know I love you.' 'Then be a shepherd to my sheep,' said Jesus. For the third time he asked him, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Now Peter was vexed at being asked the third time, 'Do you love me?' So he replied: 'Lord, you know everything, you can see I love you.' Jesus said, 'Then feed my sheep. Truly, truly I tell you, you put on your own girdle and went wherever you wanted, when you were young; but when you grow old, you will stretch out your hands for some one to gird you, and you will be taken where you have no wish to go.' (He said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God): then he added, 'Follow me.'"

Chapter XI

JESUS DEALING WITH WOMEN

Men reveal themselves in their attitude toward women. The manner, the word, the very eye itself, tells the story of the man. Condescension, the patronizing air, undue levity,—these only show the unworthy views cherished by the man. On the other hand, respect, the bearing of equality, becoming gravity,—these characterize the larger man, the larger view. High-minded men take high-minded ground concerning women. Witness the lines of C. Mackay, in the Praise of Women:

> "Woman may err, woman may give her mind
> To evil thoughts, and lose her pure estate;
> But, for one woman who affronts her kind
> By wicked passions and remorseless hate,
> A thousand make amends in age and youth,
> By heavenly pity, by sweet sympathy,
> By patient kindness, by enduring truth,
> By love, supremest in adversity."

When Christ came, women, both in his own country and in Greek and Roman circles, were under perpetual tutelage either to father, husband, brother, or guardian. Woman could not inherit except in failure of a male relative of the same degree. She could not testify in the courts, except with the consent of her

natural guardian. She was more a possession than a person. In Athens men occupied the front of the house, women the rear. They ate and lived separately. In Palestine men sat in the main body of the synagogue, women behind a lattice work in the rear. No wonder women followed, with their ministrations and great personal devotion, the man who struck the first blow at their chains. Women lovingly followed Jesus then—and follow him to-day.

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

The valley of Sychar lies, green and fair, between two mountains, Ebal and Gerizim, the whole scene full of the associations of ancient Jewish legendry. Here is Jacob's well, where the fabled father of the people of Israel watered his flocks and outwitted his wily father-in-law, Laban. Here to-day all caravans pause for refreshment, Russian pilgrims in great throngs, bearded and dusty from their long journey afoot, and Europeans and Americans beside their carriages or camels.

Here at this well Jesus met the woman of Sychar, the mountains looking down upon the hot midday scene, the dry curbstone of the well, the mud-hut town drowsing across the valley, the curl of blue smoke rising straight in the still air, as it rises to this day, from the Samaritan altar on the sacred top of Gerizim, the soft deep silence of noon over it all. The loneliness of this woman is apparent, who chooses the midday hour to come to the well, when the other women are not there. Her reticence gives way, when Jesus

asks her for a drink, to coyness, and even to jesting and coquetry. Then the smile freezes on her face as, with gentle gravity, Jesus remarks:

"'If you knew what is the free gift of God and who is asking you for a drink, you would have asked him instead, and he would have given you "living" water.'"

She then takes refuge in argument, even in theological disputation, as people always do when the sword of the spirit probes deeper and deeper into sensitive consciences. Jesus persistently presses the point into her personal life. At last the woman throws down all defenses:

"'Ah, sir,' said the woman, 'give me this water, so that I need not thirst or come all this road to draw water.' Jesus said to her, 'Go and call your husband, then come back here.' The woman replied, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You were right in saying, "I have no husband"; you have had five husbands, and he whom you have now espoused is not your husband. That was a true word.' 'Sir,' said the woman, 'I see you are a prophet. Now our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, whereas you Jews declare the proper place for worship is at Jerusalem.' 'Woman,' said Jesus, 'believe me, the time is coming when you will be worshipping the Father neither on this mountain nor at Jerusalem. You are worshipping something you do not know; we are worshipping what we do know—for salvation comes from the Jews. But the time is coming, it has come already, when the real worshippers will worship the Father in Spirit and in reality; for these are the worshippers that the Father

wants. God is Spirit, and his worshippers must worship him in Spirit and in reality.' The woman said to him, 'Well, I know messiah (which means Christ) is coming. When he arrives, he will explain it all to us.' 'I am messiah,' said Jesus, 'I who am talking to you.'"

His disciples returned at this point from Sychar, where they had gone to buy food. They showed surprise at the colloquy between their master and this woman, who had slipped out so surreptitiously to the well, but such was their deep respect for him, they said nothing. As for her, there followed fast upon her deepening conviction a sense of relief, of joy, of exultation; she abandoned her water-pot, made haste into the city, told all the men she met, not the women, that messiah had appeared, and cried: "Come here, look at a man who has told me everything I ever did!"

It is a tale full of deep human interest, pathos, tragedy, ending in joy. It is the resolving of a long-time mental conflict, the recovery from an unbearable complex of a fettered soul.

MARY AND MARTHA

Heinrich Hoffman painted a picture, that has become a great favorite, of a villa vine-covered and sun-bathed in the suburbs of an eastern city. In the foreground are two figures in oriental garb—a man seated, and, on a low hassock facing him, an oriental maiden. Her rich hair is bound in silver fillets; a tiny sandaled foot peeps from under her flowing robe; her big dark

eyes are looking up intently into his face. In the background is another oriental maiden, bearing in her hands a platter with necessaries for the table and turning a half-impatient glance upon the pair in the foreground. There can be no mistaking that group; it is Martha, busied and careful for many things, and Mary seated at the feet of Jesus. It is more, it is a picture of the world's womanhood choosing the better part, sitting at the feet of him who set her free.

The ruins of Bethany, just over the shoulder of the Mount of Olives, eastward a couple of miles from Jerusalem, is one of the most attractive spots in the environs of the Holy City. The wonderful view toward the Jordan and the Dead Sea on the one hand, domes and minarets of the city on the other, and above all the recollection that here on this little plot of ground Jesus loved best to stay when in the neighborhood of Jerusalem, all combine to give the heaps of stones on this ledge of hilltop a powerful appeal to the imagination.

Bethany probably possessed the best suburban residences of the ancient city. Here Simon, the rich Pharisee, lived, surrounded, no doubt, by others of his class. Here also lived Lazarus with Mary and Martha, his sisters, the friends with whom Jesus seems always to have stayed when he came up to Jerusalem. Vines cover the site to-day; vines and flowers must have clambered and bloomed over it then. These young people, therefore, were probably of the well-to-do merchant class, fully able to entertain in a becoming manner any visitor. In this friendship Jesus reveals his utter disregard for the worldly condition

of those with whom he came into contact. He did not specially seek out the poor, as such; he was just indifferent entirely in the matter; people were people to him.

The contrast in the characters of these two sisters is drawn, vivid and clear, in the gospel story. With the highest skill, nothing is told about them; they are made to act and speak for themselves and so to reveal themselves. Martha is the bustling housekeeper, her thought and her life material in a high degree. Mary is the thoughtful, the emotional, the spiritual. She is willing to neglect the serving, for the time being, in the rare privilege of communion with such a soul as she had never known beside. Later, in a rush of enthusiasm, she broke open her alabaster box, or cruse of rich perfume and poured it, in the midst of a feast, upon the Master's head and feet. The striking fact is that Jesus apparently regarded Martha with the same depth of affection that he felt for Mary. He loved both these women with a profound spiritual love. His mind was large enough and tolerant enough to comprehend the limitations in the minds of others. Luke, at the end of the tenth chapter, sets the picture before us with a few skillful strokes:

"In the course of their journey he entered a certain village, and a woman called Martha welcomed him to her house. She had a sister called Mary, who seated herself at the feet of the Lord to listen to his talk. Now Martha was so busy attending to them that she grew worried; she came up and said, 'Lord, is it all one to you that my sister has left me to do all the

work alone? Come, tell her to lend me a hand.' The Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, Mary has chosen the best dish, and she is not to be dragged away from it.' "

The story of the anointing, told by John in chapter twelve, is one of the most colorful in the New Testament:

"Six days before the festival, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus stayed (whom Jesus had raised from the dead). They gave a supper for him there; Martha waited on him, and Lazarus was among those who reclined at table beside him. Then Mary, taking a pound of expensive perfume, real nard, anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair, till the house was filled with the scent of the perfume. One of his disciples, Judas Iscariot (who was to betray him), said, 'Why was not this perfume sold for ten pounds, and the money given to the poor?' (Not that he cared for the poor; he said this because he was a thief, and because he carried the money-box and pilfered what was put in.) Then said Jesus, 'Let her alone, let her keep what she has for the day of my burial. You have always the poor beside you, but you have not always me.' "

MARY, THE MOTHER OF JESUS

The treatment accorded by Jesus to his mother is the essence of courtesy and tenderness. At twelve years of age in the temple he answered her anxious

inquiries with "Did you not know I had to be at my Father's house?" an enigmatic, but to her, intelligible expression, and then went obediently home with her. At the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, he replied to her suggestion that the wine had failed with an apparently brusque, "Woman, what have you to do with me?" But immediately he did all and more than she suggested.

When his mother and brethren came seeking him in the crowds, and the apostles brought him word, he answered with another oriental hyperbole:

"He was still speaking to the crowds when his mother and brothers came and stood outside; they wanted to speak to him. But he replied to the man who told him this, 'Who is my mother? and who are my brothers?' Stretching out his hand towards his disciples he said, 'Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven, that is my brother and sister and mother.' "

There is no disrespect here shown to his relatives. He merely has seized the moment and the means to teach the lesson of blood kinship in the Realm of Heaven. His bearing towards his mother has helped to give her that high place she holds, the Madonna, the queen of all women of all times.

Upon the cross he takes thought for his mother and consigns her to the care of his best earthly friend, the beloved John, who tells of it himself in modest fashion:

"Now beside the cross of Jesus stood his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary of Magdala. So when Jesus saw his mother and his favourite disciple standing near, he said to his mother, 'Woman, there is your son!' Then he said to the disciple, 'Son, there is your mother!' And from that hour the disciple took her to his home."

E. S. Barrett sings concerning woman, classic words that sum up in a few lines what this chapter is designed to convey:

"Not she with traitorous kiss her Saviour stung,
Not she denied him with unholy tongue;
She, while apostles shrank, could danger brave,
Last at his cross and earliest at his grave."

Chapter XII

THE SUPREME TRAGEDY

Acts I and II

Beauty, when awful, becomes grandeur. Here lies the charm in tragedy. The fearful beauty in the workings of fate held Athenian audiences spellbound under the lines of Aeschylus and Sophocles. The grand age in English literature is easily the age of the great Elizabethans with Shakespeare at the head.

Of all the tragedies, the sublimest is the passion of Christ; for "to lay life down for his friends, man has no greater love than that." This tragedy loses nothing in the telling; for the story comes from men who witnessed it. Oberammergau and Los Angeles, by reproducing it in the open air, are able to move thousands to tears and worship.

The last week in the life of our Lord, holding, as it does, heights of triumph and abysses of apparent defeat, comprises more of the gospel narrative than any similar period; and justly so, for the essence of the life of Jesus lies in the death. All his acts and words are significant, but his death means most to the world. There is much in the remark that "death is life's most beautiful adventure." The events of that last week, taken in the order in which they naturally fall, fit easily into four great acts, each in several scenes.

Act one opens with the spectacle of the triumphal entry and runs into the scene in the temple area in which Jesus overturns the tables of the money-changers.

Act two takes place on the day of the Passover. Scene one, Judas plots with the rulers to betray Christ. Scene two, the apostles Peter and John go into the city to find a man doing a woman's work, carrying a water-jar, and follow him. Scene three, the last supper, with its exalted speeches and dramatic events. Scene four, the Garden of Gethsemane with the betrayal and arrest.

Act three, the great climax made up of a series of tragic scenes, the trials before Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, lasting from midnight to gray dawn, the purple robe, the crown of thorns, the scourging. Then the summit of the tragedy, the crucifixion, the two thieves, the jeering crowds and wagging tongues, the rent veil of the temple, the split rocks, the reeling reasons of men, the suicide of Judas, the seven sayings on the cross, the death, the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea.

Act four, the anti-climax, or descent from the summit, the gradual relaxing of the tense nerves of the spectator after the massive third act. Here is scene after scene which follows the crucifixion—the women coming to the tomb early on the first day of the week; the appearance of the Lord to them in the garden; the running of Peter and John to the tomb; the walk to Emmaus; the early breakfast by the Lake of Galilee; the ascension.

Act I, Scene I: THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

The Passion week opens with the hosts of Israel returned from all over the world to Jerusalem for the Passover. All houses are crowded with guests, and thousands are encamped on the hillsides and in the valleys all round the city. Literally hundreds of thousands in all the garbs of the world, with all the sound and color of the Orient, throng the roads and by-paths and swarm in the city streets. Jesus, as usual, is a guest in the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, at Bethany. On the first day of the week, he starts to walk the short distance to the city, when the masses of the people learn of his approach and rush to meet and escort him. John adds the green of the palm branches to the procession, which give to the anniversary of that day in the church calendar the name of "Palm Sunday."

"And as he was now close to the descent from the Hill of Olives, all the multitude of the disciples started joyfully to praise God with a loud voice for all they had seen, saying,

" 'Blessed be the king who comes in the Lord's name!
Peace in heaven and glory in the High places!' "

Some Pharisees in the crowd said to him, " 'Check your disciples, teacher.' " But he replied, " 'I tell you, if they were to keep quiet, the very stones would shout.' "

Jesus soon perceives that he must ride if he is not to be entirely prevented by the throng from reaching the city, and sends two of his followers to the neighboring village of Bethphage for an ass. On it he rides toward the Holy City. Lowly, meek, and humble, he called himself; and humble the animal he chose to carry him; yet kings have ridden upon asses; and once this beast was the symbol of royalty. Even now, when we think of this opening scene of the supreme tragedy, this much laughed-at animal takes on a certain dignity and pathos. Gilbert K. Chesterton has finely expressed this feeling that comes over us by putting words into the mouth of the ass himself:

"The tattered outlaw of the earth,
Of ancient crooked will;
Starve, scourge, deride me; I am dumb,
I keep my secret still.

"Fools! For I also had my hour,
One far fierce hour and sweet:
There was a shout about my ears,
And palms before my feet."

This stirring scene, spectacular, full of pageantry, song, shouts, and color, ends with a touch of pathos that foreshadows the dreadful close. Jesus, recognizing the hostility of the fair-seeming city towards himself and grieving not for the fate that awaits him but for the waywardness of the people he loves, weeps and laments over Jerusalem in words that even now wring the heart:

"And when he saw the city, as he approached, he wept over it, saying, 'Would that you too knew even to-day on what your peace depends! But no, it is hidden from you! A time is coming for you when your enemies will throw up ramparts round you and encircle you and besiege you on every side and raze you and your children within you to the ground, leaving not one stone upon another within you—and all because you would not understand when God was visiting you.' "

Scene II. Here is one of the most dramatic incidents in the career of Jesus, and, on his part, most daring. He enters the Temple area, where, even in ordinary times, there was carried on an extensive traffic in doves, lambs, bullocks, and all the necessaries of the ritual, now grown, in the Passover season, to enormous proportions, until the sacred precincts had become a bawling bedlam of hawking and trading. Indignant at the profanation, the crass materialism, Jesus dashes to the ground the moneys and the money-bags, turns over stalls and seats, lashes the sacrilegious hucksters with a scourge of righteous anger and drives them from the holy area.

" 'It is written,' he told them, 'my house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.' "

Act II: THE PASSOVER

Scene I. The sinister element in the drama develops with the visit of Judas to the chief priests in order to bargain and haggle with them for the betrayal of

his Lord and leader. Some have tried to excuse Judas on the ground that he was only seeking to hurry on events which he thought inevitable, to force his Master to grasp the sword and bring on the happy dénouement. One cannot read the gospels, however, with unbiased mind, without gaining the impression that the narrators believed Judas to be actuated only by the most sordid, selfish, and depraved motives. Undoubtedly he is the Iago, the Benedict Arnold of the piece. Leonardo da Vinci's painting of the Last Supper gives the right caste to the weazened countenance of the betrayer. He is altogether a thief.

Scene II. This scene adds sunlight and homely beauty. Jesus sends two of his disciples—probably Peter and John—into the city ahead of him to seek out and prepare a suitable place for the thirteen to eat the Passover feast. He tells them they will meet a man bearing a pitcher of water. Women in the East carry the water; almost never, men. The sight of a man bearing a water-jar is so unusual as scarcely to escape attention and remark. Something has gone wrong in the household to which this man belongs. Either a maidservant, ill or truant during this feast-holiday, or an over-plus of labor in hospitality, has forced this unusual task upon a sulky manservant. He goes out to do a menial task, and comes back with the emissaries of a King!

Glad enough is the master of the house to welcome Peter and John. His guest-room, large, furnished, ready for some distinguished visitor—merchant-prince from Alexandria, Smyrna, or Rome, or Rabbi from Damascus or Athens—had not yet been bespoken.

The good man has heard of this brilliant young teacher from Galilee. Right glad is he of the honor of entertaining him. He shows Peter and John the roomy triclinium, or dining hall, the freshly sanded floor, clean and white, the long three-sided table, the couches and the cushions, the draperies over the windows fanned inward by the breeze. It will do. They make ready.

Scene III. This is the Passover itself. That last night, that large upper room, the sputtering torches, the olive-oil lamps, the lamb and the unleavened bread, the night wind and the open windows, the words he utters, the washing of his disciples' feet, the institution of the Lord's Supper, or the Holy Communion, the prayer—how can all this be so put into words as the gospels themselves have burned it into our imaginations and memories?

"Then he took a loaf and after thanking God he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This means my body given up for your sake; do this in memory of me.' So too he gave them the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup means the new covenant ratified by my blood shed for your sake. But the hand of my betrayer is on the table beside me! The Son of man moves to his end indeed as it has been decreed, but woe to the man by whom he is betrayed!' And they began to discuss among themselves which of them could possibly be going to do such a thing."

Scene IV. Swiftly follow the events of that night, the singing of the midnight song in the Upper Room;

the departure for the Brook Kedron and the olive-garden of Gethsemane; the prayer of Jesus, alone among the stones and the trees, while his disciples sleep; the coming of the betrayer with the Temple guard, and the dancing lights; the vicious kiss of betrayal; the blow from Simon Peter with the sword; the quick healing of the wounded man, Malchus, by the Saviour; the overpowering presence of Christ before whom the guards fall back to the ground. An American poet, Sidney Lanier, sings a plaintive song, like that of a flute, about the garden scene:

A BALLAD OF TREES AND THE MASTER

"Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to Him,
The little gray leaves were kind to Him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to Him
When into the woods He came.

"Out of the woods my Master went,
And He was well content.
Out of the woods my Master came,
Content with death and shame.
When Death and Shame would woo Him last,
From under the trees they drew Him last;
'Twas on a tree they slew Him—last,
When out of the woods He came."

It is difficult to choose from the four gospels the one that contains the most tragic beauty; but Matthew's account is here selected (Matthew XXVI). The reader may find the other accounts near the close of each gospel:

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he told the disciples, 'Sit here till I go over there and pray.' But he took Peter and the two sons of Zebedaeus along with him; and when he began to feel distressed and agitated, he said to them, 'My heart is sad, sad even to death; stay here and watch with me.' Then he went forward a little and fell on his face praying, 'My father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me. Yet, not what I will but what thou wilt.' Then he went to the disciples and found them asleep; and he said to Peter, 'So the three of you could not watch with me for a single hour? Watch and pray, all of you, so that you may not slip into temptation. The spirit is eager but the flesh is weak.' Again he went away for the second time and prayed, 'My Father, if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done.' And when he returned he found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So he left them and went back for the third time, praying in the same words as before. Then he went to the disciples and said to them, 'Still asleep? still resting? The hour is near, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.'"

Chapter XIII

THE SUPREME TRAGEDY

Acts III and IV

Act III, Scenes I-III. There were three trials of Christ, all of which took place in the darkness of the night. The first of these was before Annas and Caiaphas, the High Priests, no doubt in the hall where the Great Sanhedrin held its sessions, called the Chamber of Hewn Stone. It was a somber and forbidding place, fit setting for the travesty upon justice which here occurred. The serene silence of Jesus in the face of his accusers, the manly refusal to answer all accusations, his evident determination not to enter upon a defense that he knew to be utterly useless—all betoken, not the wan, weak figure too often imagined of him but a heroic, althletic, strong young man of complete control. Without, in the courtyard, Peter, the leader of the twelve, denies all knowledge of his Master, with curses.

Next Jesus is taken to Pilate, who for reasons of expediency sends him to the reigning Herod, Antipas, the black-browed and incestuous slayer of the Baptist. Herod had had enough of prophet's blood. Remorse for the crime he had done at the behest of the dancing girl had long been gnawing at his heart. He disclaimed jurisdiction.

The blood-thirsty mob, afraid to proceed to ex-

tremities without some semblance of judicial sanction, next drag their victim back to the judgment hall of the Roman Procurator, Pontius Pilate. Here is a great scene in the supreme tragedy; next to the crucifixion itself, it is the greatest scene in the drama. Artists have recognized it as such and have seized upon it as the subject for pictures that have become favorites throughout the Christian world. Munkacsy never did anything finer than his Christ before Pilate.

One can imagine the Roman official, dragged from his sleep, the stubble of grizzled beard upon his face, the close-cropped hair, the square determined chin, the testy humor. One is sorry for Pilate, who cares nothing about the fanatical squabbles of this strange religion. His business only to keep the peace and maintain the Law! Yet evidently he quickly falls under the spell of this vigorous and charming young rabbi, so serene and so calm. Pilate twists and squirms in the embarrassment to which his official duty has subjected him; he offers a substitute, Bar-Abbas, the highwayman; he calls for a basin and washes his hands; and finally, after twice privately examining the prisoner and openly declaring that he finds no fault in him, he gives him over to be executed.

Weakness, vacillation, confession of injustice? All of that; but, from the standpoint of a ruthless Roman administrator, justifiable, indeed, inevitable. Not even Hamlet better portrays the indecision of a distressed mind refusing to take a vigorous stand. John in the nineteenth chapter sets forth, with simple restraint, the pitiful vacillation:

"Now when Pilate heard that, he was still more afraid; he went inside the praetorium again and asked Jesus, 'Where do you come from?' Jesus made no reply. Then Pilate said, 'You will not speak to me? Do you not know it is in my power to release you or to crucify you?' Jesus answered, 'You would have no power over me, unless it had been granted you from above. So you are less guilty than he who betrayed me to you.' This made Pilate anxious to release him, but the Jews yelled, 'If you release him, you are no friend of Caesar's! Any one who makes himself a king is against Caesar!' On hearing this, Pilate brought Jesus out and seated him on the tribunal at a spot called the 'mosaic pavement'—the Hebrew name is Gabbatha (it was the day of Preparation for the passover, about noon). 'There is your king!' he said to the Jews. Then they yelled, 'Off with him! Off with him! Crucify him!' 'Crucify your king?' said Pilate. The high priests retorted, 'We have no king but Caesar!' Then Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified."

Scene IV: THE CRUCIFIXION

The climax of the world-tragedy begins in the outer court of the Governor's palace. The scourging, with the heavy Roman scourge, leather-thongs strung with metal slugs, is a piece of barbarity to satisfy hate. The athletic young figure is soon changed to a weak and blood-soaked wreck. The humiliations, the mockeries, the tortures, are almost too painful for the reader to bear, even as told in the restrained and unimpas-

sioned language of the gospels. How great is their reserve can only be appreciated by one who tries even now coolly to write the story. How lofty is their art can only be discerned by reading their narratives over with the difficulties of measured portrayal in mind.

The cross, ready prepared, is laid upon his bowed shoulders; and to-day in Jerusalem the course they took with him is marked out by the stations, or resting-places, of the cross, along the Via Dolorosa, the Way of Sorrow, where he paused, or fainted. Finally a stranger, looking on, is forced to carry the cross for the fainting victim, and for this service has attained immortality—Simon of Cyrene.

They nailed him to the cross on the top of a hill outside the gates, called Golgotha, the place of a skull. On the north side of Jerusalem, just outside the Damascus gate, one may stand to-day and gaze upon a dome-shaped hill, with two caverns in the precipitous side nearest to the city, and imagine he is looking into a fleshless face. It is Gordon's Calvary. It is the place which the Englishman, Chinese Gordon, the Christian general, with a keen intuition, first pointed out to the world as the probable place of the crucifixion. Strange how so many centuries, even of crusaders, passed under it, without discerning the possibilities. Now perhaps the preponderance of opinion is favorable to General Gordon's surmise. Underneath that cliff is a garden, and in it, a tomb, hollowed out of the rock, with a huge round stone, resting in a groove, in such manner that it can be rolled into place to close the cavern.

No other words should be used to describe the supreme tragedy except the simple and great words of the gospels themselves. Says Matthew:

"Then they crucified him, distributed his clothes among them by drawing lots, and sat down there to keep watch over him. They also put over his head his charge in writing,

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS

"Two robbers were also crucified with him at that time, one on the right hand and one on the left. Those who passed by scoffed at him, nodding at him in derision and calling, 'You were to destroy the temple and build it in three days! Save yourself, if you are God's Son! Come down from the cross!' So, too, the high priests made fun of him with the scribes and the elders of the people. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he cannot save himself! He the "King of Israel"! Let him come down now from the cross; then we will believe in him! *His trust is in God? Let God deliver him now if he cares for him!* He said he was the Son of God!' The robbers who were crucified with him also denounced him in the same way.

"Now from twelve o'clock to three o'clock darkness covered all the land, and about three o'clock Jesus gave a loud cry, *'Eli, eli, lema sabachthani'* (that is, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?') On hearing this some of the bystanders said, 'He is calling

for Elijah.' One of them ran off at once and took a sponge, which he soaked in vinegar and put on the end of a stick to give him a drink. But the others said, 'Stop, let us see if Elijah does come to save him!' (Seizing a lance, another pricked his side, and out came water and blood.) Jesus again uttered a loud scream and gave up his spirit."

Act IV: AFTER DEATH

It is the province of the fourth act, always, to bring the audience gradually down from the high altitudes and the tension of the great third act to a calmer level. In this sense, then, the fourth act furnishes the anticlimax. The events narrated as following the crucifixion are admirably adapted to this purpose. There is the three days' suspense during which Jesus lies in the tomb; then comes the resurrection, with the Easter passages about his meetings with the women, Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary," and with his disciples, Peter and John; the relief to tense nerves, the sigh of mingled astonishment and satisfaction over the dénouement which, after all, is a happy one for all the world.

What happened after the burial of Jesus is a mystery and no doubt will ever remain a mystery; but mystery is an essential element in religion. That his disciples were firmly convinced he arose from the dead, and in some form appeared to them, there can be no shadow of doubt. Like Paul we cannot say with what body he came. Something happened, something strange and startling that proved to his followers he

was not dead. One cannot read these post-resurrection accounts without a sense that the writers are sincere and that they accomplish an impression not to be accomplished easily with purely fictitious materials, an impression of verisimilitude.

What concerns us most of all is the fact that he is not now dead, that he is significantly alive in our age, and that he has been for all the centuries since his crucifixion. There are many great souls of the past who still live in their influence upon our time; but there are none so keenly alive as Jesus. No one sensitive to the signs of our time can fail to perceive this truth. This, then, is the vital truth which, so far as we are concerned, enters into the situation.

There are several scenes in this fourth act. The play is too monumental for us to bring all of them here before our eyes. We can only select certain ones. There is first the scene at the base of Gordon's Calvary, in the garden, at the empty tomb. The women came breathlessly through the darkest hour just before the dawn, bearing their spices and myrrh with which to anoint his body, anxious about the rolling away of the huge stone from before the opening of the tomb. The words hold for us centuries of Easter association:

"At the close of the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. But a great earthquake took place, an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and went and rolled away the boulder and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning and his

raiment white as snow. For fear of him the sentries shook and became like dead men; but the angel addressed the women, saying, 'Have no fear; I know you are looking for the crucified Jesus. He is not here, he has risen, as he told you he would. See, here is the place where he (the Lord) lay. Now be quick and go to his disciples, tell them he has risen from the dead and that "he precedes you to Galilee; you shall see him there." That is my message for you.' Then they ran quickly from the tomb in fear and great joy, to announce the news to his disciples."

Then follow scenes in Jerusalem, and in Galilee, scenes in which the chief figure is now Thomas, the doubter, now Peter, the denier. There is the scene of the ascension narrated in the first chapter of Acts of the Apostles, in which, upon the summit of the Hill of Olives, he takes last leave of his followers, declaring that they shall be his messengers to all the earth. But there is no scene of more quiet and pastoral beauty among them than the walk to Emmaus. Even now the walk to the village called "Emwas" is one of the most attractive in the environs of Jerusalem. One of these two disciples was Clopas. Who was the other we can only conjecture. Two of his intimates walk toward the village of Emmaus, aimlessly perhaps, certainly with sadness, when a stranger joins them; they tell him of their disappointment about the Jesus whom they had hoped to be the Messiah. He chides them for lack of faith in the scriptures and is about to pass on. Luke tells the story:

"Now they approached the village to which they were going. He pretended to be going further on, but they pressed him, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is getting towards evening and the day has now declined.' So he went in to stay with them. And as he lay at table with them he took the loaf, blessed it, broke it and handed it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognised him, but he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our hearts glow within us when he was talking to us on the road, opening up the scriptures for us?' "

Thus closes the tragedy; and so ends the story of the life of Christ. Beginning quietly, it grows in excitement and storm and ends in peace. The effects of this story upon the history of the world no one can measure. Those effects seem to be increasing all the time. We could better afford to lose all other literature than these four gospels.

Book Two: THE CHURCH IN THE ACTS

Book Two: THE CHURCH IN THE ACTS

Chapter XIV

THE BIRTH AND INFANCY OF THE CHURCH

It is the cultivated and skillful writer, Luke, the physician, who gives us this book—The Acts—and the third gospel. Both are dedicated to a friend, or to a personification, Theophilus, whose name means, "Lover of God." If one glances at the opening of the Gospel of Luke and then reads the dedication of The Acts, he cannot fail to discern the similarity in style. Here is the beginning of The Acts:

"In my former volume, Theophilus, I treated all that Jesus began by doing and teaching down to the day when, after issuing his orders by the holy Spirit to the disciples whom he had chosen, he was taken up to heaven. After his sufferings he had shown them that he was alive by a number of proofs, revealing himself to them for forty days and discussing the affairs of God's Realm."

Beginning where his gospel leaves off, at the resurrection, with chaos among the Christians, and an unformed church, St. Luke, in this second book, sets himself the task of telling what the twelve did, and

those who worked with them, for spreading the new-found faith all over the Roman world. Starting at Jerusalem, advancing through Syria and Asia Minor, then into Greece, and finally on to Rome, the story marches with definite purpose, dignity, and unity. As soon as the task is ended and the gospel, in the keeping of St. Paul, arrives at Rome, the narrator ceases. Tempting as it must have been to detail all that happened to the Apostle to the Gentiles in the imperial city, including his trials, his appearances before Caesar, his condemnation, his martyrdom, Luke has nothing to say of all these dramatic events, to which he no doubt was an eye-witness. His self-restraint is artistic and convincing. Not every writer knows when to cease. St. Luke is a model for newspaper reporters and all writers of condensed narrative.

The keynote to the book is contained in the interview between Jesus and the eleven apostles in the first chapter, immediately preceding the ascension. Without delay, the skillful narrator begins with the assembling of the scattered and timorous disciples on the day of Pentecost, sets forth the enduement with a new and powerful spirit, and their immediate proclamation of their new faith in many tongues. Here, in the second chapter of Acts, is a multicolored picture of a throng from all over the world, eager for the new story. If many of the verses of Homer are enriched by catalogues of sonorous names, not less so is the narrative of the dwellers in far lands come home to Jerusalem.

The address which Simon Peter gave upon this occasion must be reserved for comment until a later chap-

ter, but the effect of it, and the beautiful community life of the nucleus of the church is apparent.

"The believers all kept together; they shared all they had with one another, they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds among all, as any one might be in need. Day after day they resorted with one accord to the temple and broke bread together in their own homes; they ate with a glad and simple heart, praising God and looked on with favour by all the people. Meantime the Lord added the saved daily to their number."

The idyll, however, quickly gives place to the tragedy; for after the choice of the first deacons, or administrators of the business affairs of the beloved community, there follows hard the martyrdom of one of the most charming of them, Stephen.

This first martyr, Stephen, was probably a native of Cilicia, that province in Asia Minor from which Paul, the apostle, came. Not unlikely, indeed, Stephen lived in Tarsus, on the Cydnus river, studied in the far-famed university there, obtained something of the Greek view of life and even, perhaps, some proficiency in the Greek games. He and Paul may have met, in those old days, when they were boys, and may have come to Jerusalem together to sit at the feet of Jewish rabbis. We first see St. Paul at the stoning of Stephen, when those who did the bloody work laid their garments down at the feet of the "young man named Saul." That martyrdom, and others which he witnessed, undoubtedly had a powerful effect upon the

mind of Saul, and formed a psychological preparation for his own conversion.

Stephen, arraigned before the Sanhedrin, in the somber "Chamber of Hewn Stone," in the Temple, shows himself an orator of no mean gifts, a master of invective, as he hurls defiance in the teeth of his accusers. Although he follows the favorite Hebrew methods of appeal to Hebrew history, nevertheless he employs certain Greek turns of rhetoric which bear out our conjecture that in his far away Cilician boyhood home, he may have had contact with Greek culture. At all events, his daring, and his accusing words, in the presence of that august assembly of the elders of his people, are dramatic and moving. These words seal his doom. He is led forth beyond the gates and stoned, probably at the foot of that very hill which bore the cross of the Lord in whose behalf he played so brave a part.

The blood of the martyrs, however, is always the seed of the church. The scattering of the disciples by persecution is the scattering of that seed. Everywhere they went, they preached. A typical story, and one of rare charm, is that of Philip the Evangelist, in the eighth chapter:

"But an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Get up and go south, along the road from Jerusalem to Gaza' (the desert-route). So he got up and went on his way. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a high official of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians (he was her chief treasurer), who had come to Jerusalem for worship and was on his way home. He was sitting

in his chariot, reading the prophet Isaiah. The Spirit said to Philip, 'Go up and join that chariot.' When Philip ran up, he heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. 'Do you really understand what you are reading?' he asked. 'Why, how can I possibly understand it,' said the eunuch, 'unless some one puts me on the right track?' And he begged Philip to get up and sit beside him. Now the passage of scripture which he was reading was as follows:—

"'he was led like a sheep to be slaughtered,
and as a lamb is dumb before the shearer,
so he opens not his lips.
By humbling himself he had his doom removed.
Who can tell his family?
For his life is cut off from the earth.'

"So the eunuch said to Philip, 'Pray, who is the prophet speaking about? Is it himself or some one else?' Then Philip opened his lips, and starting from this scripture preached the gospel of Jesus to him. As they travelled on, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'Here is water! What is to prevent me being baptized?' So he ordered the chariot to stop. Both of them stepped into the water, and Philip baptized the eunuch. When they came up from the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, and the eunuch lost sight of him. He went on his way rejoicing, while Philip found himself at Azotus, where he passed on, preaching the gospel in every town, till he reached Caesarea."

Chapter XV

DAWNING SENSE OF UNIVERSALITY

A signal example of the way in which persecution reacts in favor of a good cause is found in the remarkable conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who appears first for a moment in the story at the stoning of Stephen. From the time he enters the narrative he carries most of the burden of progress across continents, bearing to the Gentiles the gospel message, until he brings it to Rome.

The complete change of mind on the part of Saul of Tarsus cannot have been instantaneous. One who persecutes a new faith, as he did, does not change over night into an advocate. It is psychologically impossible. Saul had seen the heroic deaths of many Christians. A man of judicial temperament, a lawyer, and, more important still, a large-minded cosmopolitan, he could not look unmoved upon the serene devotion with which these men and women died. He must have pondered these things whenever he got time to meditate. So furiously active was he, however, that he had little opportunity to think, until, on the blood-thirsty mission to Damascus, he had to ride long hours across the desert in the bright sunlight. The effect upon both his physical and spiritual vision then becomes understandable. Both kinds of eyes were opened, after blinding light. He tells the story him-

self, in true oriental fashion, in his address before Agrippa.

Simon Peter, too, opened his own eyes to the mission of the new religion to Gentiles as well as Jews, only after a vision. Indeed he never fully grasped the world-wide view. Paul even opposes certain attitudes and actions of Peter, which evince the spirit of a narrow nationalism; and this clash between the world view and the Hebrew view is felt throughout the Acts, not only, but also all the rest of the New Testament. St. Paul fought a great fight in behalf of internationalism for the gospel. From the time of his conversion Christianity becomes a world religion.

Now the capital of Christendom may be said actually to shift from Jerusalem to Antioch of Syria. Antioch was the second city of the Roman Empire, beautiful, rich, powerful. Here was an amphitheater, almost equal to the Colosseum, here the marble "Way" of Herod, here the first lighted streets in the world, here a garden of greenery and fruitfulness watered by the clear, cold Orontes river. At the persecution following the stoning of Stephen, certain evangelists came to Antioch and made many converts.

"It was at Antioch too that the disciples were originally called 'Christians.' "

Antioch becomes the headquarters of Saul, soon to be called Paul, for his journeys into the west. Once, twice, thrice, perhaps a fourth time, he covers the eastern half of the world from Syria to the Aegean, taking months and years for his long progresses, and

for his patient planting of churches. The beginning of all this effort is set forth in chapter thirteen:

"Now in the local church at Antioch there were prophets and teachers, Barnabas, Symeon (called Niger) and Lucius the Cyrenian, besides Manaen (a foster-brother of Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. As they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the holy Spirit said, 'Come! set me apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.' Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and let them go.

"Sent out thus by the holy Spirit, they went down to Seleucia and from there they sailed to Cyprus. On reaching Salamis they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues, with John as their assistant."

The John here referred to is John Mark, the author of the second Gospel.

They encountered many hardships and many strange experiences. They met the heathen world and all its old picturesque customs and prejudices in Asia Minor, the most historic peninsula in the world, where old Troy lies in ruins far beneath the soil. At Lystra occurred an episode, diverting and striking, which pictures the clash of old systems with the new:

"Barnabas they called Zeus, and Paul, Hermes, since he was the chief spokesman. Indeed the priest of the temple of Zeus in front of the town brought oxen and garlands to the gates, intending to offer sacrifice along with the crowds. But when the apos-

tles, Paul and Barnabas, heard this they rent their clothes and sprang out among the crowd, shouting, 'Men, what is this you are doing? We are but human, with natures like your own! The gospel we are preaching to you is to turn from such futile ways to the living God who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is. In bygone ages he allowed all nations to go their own ways, though as the bountiful Giver he did not leave himself without a witness, giving you rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, giving you food and joy to your heart's content.' Even by saying this it was all they could do to keep the crowds from sacrificing to them."

The fifteenth chapter describes how, on returning from his missionary journey to Jerusalem, Paul makes final adjustment with the other apostles, regarding the status of converts from the Roman world. Then Paul sets out again to carry the standard of empire farther toward the setting sun. Luke now uses the first personal pronoun "we," indicating his own presence with the party. Paul comes to the shores of the Aegean and crosses into Europe. So skillful is the narration and so beautiful the chime of the ancient names that this log-book of a journey becomes a pleasing piece of literature. Great, enthusiastic souls, like Paul, are likely to look upon the processes of their minds as "visions" and "calls." The story loses on this account none of its charm:

"A vision appeared to Paul by night, the vision of a Macedonian standing and appealing to him with

the words, 'Cross to Macedonia and help us.' As soon as he saw the vision, we made efforts to start for Macedonia, inferring that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. Setting sail then from Troas we ran straight to Samothrace and on the following day to Neapolis. We then came to the Roman colony of Philippi, which is the foremost town of the district of Macedonia. In this town we spent some days. On the sabbath we went outside the gate to the bank of the river, where as usual there was a place of prayer; we sat down and talked to the women who had gathered. Among the listeners there was a woman called Lydia, a dealer in purple who belonged to the town of Thyatira. She reverenced God, and the Lord opened her heart to attend to what Paul said. When she was baptized, along with her household, she begged us, saying, 'If you are convinced I am a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house.' She compelled us to come."

At Philippi, the last battlefield of Brutus and Cassius, Paul shows his qualities, singing in prison and the midnight, and then somewhat haughtily demanding, on account of his Roman citizenship, escort out of an unjust imprisonment. He converts his jailor, confounds the magistrates, and altogether shows himself a vigorous man of the world as well as missioner. One thrills at his claim of Roman birth and his proud defiance of the rulers.

The journeys and work of Paul are so full of moving incident as well as attractive character portrayal, that it is difficult to make selection. Ephesus

became the theater for much of his activity, and it is at Ephesus we first meet the striking Apollos, who afterward perhaps became the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Ephesus is at the present time one of the most beautiful and interesting of ancient ruins. Lying on a wide plain sprinkled with myriads of crimson poppies, its columns and arches fallen, its mighty theaters and temples, among them the great temple of Diana, covered with moss and vines, it is slowly crumbling back to the earth whence it came. One stands among those prostrate columns and entablatures and sees again the throngs that swirled and shouted, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," and stoned the messenger of a new god. So vivid is the impression left by the literary physician, Luke, who saw it all, upon the minds of our own day nearly two thousand years after.

Chapter XVI

THE GOSPEL CARRIED TO ROME

Most of St. Paul's career as a traveler circles round the Aegean Sea. Asia Minor, Macedonia, Achaia, and the Greek Archipelago, the highly colored and storied lands of classic art and myth and epic, these he daily looked upon.

> "The isles of Greece, the isles of Greece!
> Where burning Sappho loved and sung,
> Where grew the arts of war and peace,
> Where Delos rose, and Phoebus sprung!
> Eternal summer gilds them yet;
> But all, except their sun, is set."

Many others besides Byron have loved these blue waters, these green islands, these happy shores, with their houses, white, blue, pink, clothed in green vines and purple bougainvillaea. St. Paul must have loved them. A certain sadness seems to have come over him as, for the last time, he sailed among them on his way up to Jerusalem. Somehow, he discerned that when he reached the Holy City, enmity against him would attain its climax; like his Master he would be taken and imprisoned. All the while he held in reserve his Roman citizenship, his right to appeal to Caesar, his certainty of being sent, should he so

choose, to plead his own case in the palace of the Emperors at Rome.

Events hurry forward, therefore, toward the great end, the launching of the gospel at the Capitol itself, the lodging of it in the Palace of the Caesars. The narrative gathers speed as St. Paul turns his steps toward his inevitable arrest. He sails away toward Jerusalem, past the isles of Greece, past Chios, past Samos, past Smyrna, ill-fated Smyrna, rounding the headland, at the southwest angle of Asia Minor, and puts in at the seaport of Ephesus. From Miletus he sends to Ephesus for the elders of the church. He exhorts them concerning the care of his beloved churches, tells them plainly that he never expects to see them again, and they all bid him a final farewell. It is a touching scene!

"With these words he knelt down and prayed beside them all. They all broke into loud lamentation and falling upon the neck of Paul kissed him fondly, sorrowing chiefly because he told them they would never see his face again. Then they escorted him to the ship."

If Renan could call the gospel of Luke "the most beautiful book that ever was," we are certainly safe in calling The Acts one of the swiftest and most vivid narratives ever written. We move, in thorough sympathy with Paul, rapidly to the coast of Syria, land and go up to Caesarea, visit the Christians there, meet Agabus the prophet, who binds the Apostle with Paul's own girdle and predicts that so should the owner of

this belt be bound at Jerusalem. Thence, "After these days we packed up and started for Jerusalem."

The uproar, upon the entrance of St. Paul within the walls, bursts instantly, as if a bomb had been exploded in the city. This stormy petrel brings with him, into the already charged atmosphere, lightnings and clashing winds. The story speeds swiftly along:

"The whole city was thrown into turmoil. The people rushed together, seized Paul and dragged him outside the temple; whereupon the doors were immediately shut. They were attempting to kill him, when word reached the commander of the garrison that the whole of Jerusalem was in confusion. Taking some soldiers and officers, he at once rushed down to them, and when they saw the commander and the soldiers they stopped beating Paul. Then the commander came up and seized him; he ordered him to be bound with a couple of chains, and asked 'Who is he?' and 'What has he done?' Some of the crowd roared one thing, some another, and as he could not learn the facts owing to the uproar, he ordered Paul to be taken to the barracks."

St. Paul asks permission to address the people from the stairs of the Castle of Antonia, which is readily granted. Choosing their own tongue, he captures their attention, in spite of all the tumult—no small oratorical feat. They hear him with restraint until he mentions his mission to the Gentiles, then they howl him down.

Brought before the Jewish assembly, the Great San-

hedrin, in that same historic Chamber of Hewn Stone, he shows himself the man of the world, the adroit politician, and divides the assembly over an ancient controversy between Pharisees and Sadducees about the resurrection. The high priest, Ananias, commands the guard to strike him on the mouth; and Paul replies with spirit, "You whitewashed wall, God will strike you!" Then, on learning it was the high priest he addressed, he apologized.

During a long imprisonment in Jerusalem and Caesarea, he makes a number of addresses before persons of importance, like Felix, Festus, and Agrippa, and finally stands on his rights as a Roman citizen,—of whom there were not many outside of the Eternal City itself, and these few held in high honor and clothed with special privileges—and appealed to Caesar. The moment is a dramatic one, in which he makes the appeal; and Luke tells it with dramatic brevity and force. Festus is now the Roman procurator, holding the position that once belonged to Pontius Pilate:

"As Festus wanted to ingratiate himself with the Jews, he asked Paul, 'Will you go up to Jerusalem and be tried there by me upon these charges?' Paul said, 'I am standing before Caesar's tribunal; that is where I ought to be tried. I have done no wrong whatever to the Jews—you know that perfectly well. If I am a criminal, if I have done anything that deserves death, I do not object to die; but if there is nothing in any of their charges against me, then no one can give me up to them. I appeal to Caesar!' Then, after conferring with the council, Festus an-

swered, 'You have appealed to Caesar? Very well, you must go to Caesar.'"

At last, therefore, St. Paul has his long-deferred wish fulfilled; he is in sight of his goal; he is destined for Rome. The journey thither is picturesque, varied, and told in a style of the best reporting. No more vivid, condensed narrative of shipwreck has ever been written than that in Acts twenty-seven; and Prof. William Ramsey believes that St. Luke, in this story, tells us more of the ships of the Mediterranean than any classic writer has done.

The end of the journey brings the gospel to Rome. The great climax had appeared in the arrest in Jerusalem, and the accomplished narrator ends his story quietly in Paul's own hired house in Rome:

"In this way we reached Rome. As the local brothers had heard about us, they came out to meet us as far as Appii Forum and Tres Tabernae, and when Paul saw them he thanked God and took courage. When we did reach Rome, Paul got permission to live by himself, with a soldier to guard him. . . . For two full years he remained in his private lodging, welcoming anyone who came to visit him; he preached the Reign of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ quite openly and unmolested."

Chapter XVII

ORATORY IN THE EARLY CHURCH

Examples of classic oratory have come down to us. Although many of them are stilted and artificial beyond modern endurance, some possess power and beauty. The flaming addresses of the prophets of Israel, notably Isaiah, cast their glow across the centuries. The phillipics of Demosthenes bring back to our imaginations the Athenian popular assemblies, sitting forward in their marble seats to hang upon his words. The impassioned periods of Cicero delivered like thunder-bolts against Cataline, which shook the very Forum in Rome, every schoolboy reads. John Chrysostom, he of the golden mouth, speaks to those familiar with church literature in tones that chime down the centuries like bells. Among the Hebrews, public speech belonged largely to the prophets who threatened and thundered against desertion of Jehovah for the gods of surrounding nations. Not until The Acts records the speeches of the apostles, does a more modern note appear, with a very definite purpose of convincing and persuading. After all what is oratory except talk that leads people to do things?

The author of The Acts, St. Luke, shows himself an excellent reporter of events concisely told, not only, but also of speeches. The addresses in The Acts, coming as they do out of stirring events, affecting old

passions and prejudices, carrying the light of a new religion, must have thrilled their hearers. If a great occasion, a great message, and a great man are necessary to make a great speech, all three elements are present in the oratory of The Acts. Simon Peter, the "Rock Apostle," Stephen, the first martyr, St. Paul, the messenger to the Gentile world,—these are great men speaking; and they preached great sermons. St. Paul, especially, reputed to have been the greatest of all preachers, gives evidence of his qualities in the addresses recorded in The Acts.

Public speech is a form of acting; and the best acting is an expression of personality. Only those who know how to "let go," to be intensely and serenely themselves, can become great speakers. Those who consciously or unconsciously try to "act," during public speech, defeat their own purpose, like players who overdo their part or miss its spirit. The power to be, while before an audience, one's own individual self is rare. Although the result of long and painful training, it is, like the art of poetry, first of all a gift. Many men would be interesting and charming if only they knew the secret of self-revelation. The speakers of The Acts quickly learned, by the stress of opposition, by enthusiastic absorption in the great new message, to fling all posing and pretense away, and to let their own selves shine.

The first sermon in Christian history is that of Simon Peter on the day of Pentecost, recorded in the second chapter of The Acts. The leader of the twelve speaks to an audience of Jews. Taking his departure from their ancient story, performing what teachers

now call the process of apperception, he lifts his hearers from the known to the unknown, from those things which from childhood their fathers and their synagogue schools taught them, to the new and strange story of the Christ. While doing so, he reveals the same old impetuous Peter who had gone to such extremes of conduct during his two or three years of association with Jesus. We can almost see his fiery spirit luminous, his rugged face radiant, his gestures powerful, and hear his words pouring forth tempestuous as a rushing river.

His peroration consists of a parallel between David and Christ, David who is dead and buried, and Christ, who though slain by wicked hands, is alive and working in the world; and he concludes:

"This Jesus God raised, as we can all bear witness. Uplifted then by God's right hand, and receiving from the Father the long-promised holy Spirit, he has poured on us what you now see and hear. For it was not David who ascended to heaven; David says,

" 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,
till I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." '

So let all the house of Israel understand beyond a doubt that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this very Jesus whom you have crucified."

The sermon brought results, which after all is the true test of oratory. Three thousand at least were

convinced; for that many made open avowal of their belief, and were baptized.

A different type of public address appears in the seventh of The Acts—Stephen's defense before the Sanhedrin. The plan is similar, the review of Jewish history, the appeal to Jewish pride and patriotism, suddenly merging into the story of Jesus, the Christ. No doubt all these early preachers were deliberately trained in this general method of approach, and varied it only according to their varied personalities. Indeed it is natural for accomplished speakers, in times of emergency, to base their addresses upon the national history and traditions of those whom they wish to convince and persuade. Considering that Stephen is on trial for his life before a hostile assembly, his speech is a model of skill and desperate courage.

This Stephen, as we have already seen, is quite a different character from Simon Peter. He gives evidence of some rhetorical training, no doubt obtained in the Greek environment of his boyhood home in Cilicia, probably in the schools of public address connected with the University at Tarsus. This young cosmopolitan is none the less familiar with the telling passages in Hebrew annals and employs them. The most striking thing, however, in his defense is his gallant attack, in his closing words, upon the rock-bound conservatism of his hearers, the chief men in Jerusalem:

"Stiff-necked, uncircumcised in heart and ear, you are always resisting the holy Spirit! As with your fathers, so with you! Which of the prophets did your

fathers fail to persecute? They killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Just One. And here you have betrayed him, murdered him!—you who got the Law that angels transmitted, and have not obeyed it!"

The result was inevitable. Inflamed with anger, and perhaps distressed by uneasy consciences, they condemned him and stoned him. The defense would seem to have been a failure; yet no one can say what effect it and the death of the martyr may have had upon the man who later was to make converts by the thousand among the nations of the Roman world—Saul of Tarsus. No one can say when a speech is a success and when a failure. Lincoln thought his Gettysburg speech a failure.

Some good examples of deliberative discourse appear in the fifteenth chapter of The Acts. Here the apostles and other leaders of the church assembled to debate an important question of church policy. Should the Gentiles be compelled to become proselytes to Judaism, entering by the gate of circumcision, before they were permitted to become Christians by the gate of baptism? It is a momentous decision; and no doubt the presence of Paul and Barnabas turned the scale in favor of liberty; so that it is safe to say that so far as human wisdom can perceive, it is due to Paul that Christianity is to-day a free, independent religion, instead of a sect of the Jews.

This fifteenth of Acts has long been a battle-ground among New Testament scholars. The controversy here revealed between the conservative Jewish element

and the progressive element at work in the Gentile world, between the faction represented by James, the Bishop of Jerusalem, on the one hand and by Paul on the other, certainly rent the early church. It is possible to press too far the matter of finding, in this schism, the key to all the writings of the New Testament; nevertheless the council held at Jerusalem, as described in this chapter, throws much light upon the atmosphere there prevailing. It throws light, also, upon the character of James, his diplomacy, his dignity, his title of "The Just." He is a church statesman, the first of that type, and his summing up of the situation gives evidence of that fact:

"When they had finished speaking, James spoke. 'Brothers,' he said, 'listen to me. Symeon has explained how it was God's original concern to secure a People from among the Gentiles to bear his Name. This agrees with the words of the prophets; as it is written,

" 'After this I will return and rebuild David's fallen
tent,
its ruins I will rebuild and erect it anew,
that the rest of men may seek for the Lord,
even all the Gentiles who are called by my name,

saith the Lord, who makes this known from of old. Hence, in my opinion, we ought not to put fresh difficulties in the way of those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but write them injunctions to abstain from whatever is contaminated by idols,

from sexual vice, from the flesh of animals that have been strangled, and from tasting blood; for Moses has had his preachers from the earliest ages in every town, where he is read aloud in the synagogues every sabbath.' "

Like all compromises, the decision of the assembly seems to have satisfied neither faction to the full; and we find St. Paul later ignoring the injunction about meat offered to idols, and advising his converts to eat what was set before them asking no questions.

Concerning all the addresses reported in the New Testament, we must remember that we have only the skeletons, the outlines. The speeches themselves, no doubt, occupied many minutes, running even to an hour each, at times, while the reported résumé may be read in but a few minutes. What must it have been, therefore, to be present and listen to the whole of that fiery defense of Stephen before the Sanhedrin?

Chapter XVIII

THE GREAT PREACHING OF PAUL

Paul, the apostle, is proverbially the prince of preachers. "To preach like Paul" is a phrase of ancient usage. Of all the addresses reported in The Acts, his are to the western reader the most eloquent, most striking, most convincing. His voice has so reverberated through the centuries that the biggest of the bells of London is fitly called "The Great Paul."

AT MARS HILL

To-day in Athens the traveler would as soon think of passing by the Acropolis as to fail to visit the Areopagus, or Mars Hill. It was here that Paul delivered one of his most skillful and beautiful sermons, or addresses. Nothing remains of the ancient market-place where the Athenians gathered to hear or to tell some new strange thing, except the barren rocks on which, no doubt, once stood colonnades of graceful marble columns. But one's imagination supplies the throngs, the parti-colored costumes, the shrewd, inquisitive faces, the tense and breathless interest with which these intellectual leaders of mankind listened to the stranger telling of a new God.

Paul is courteous, adroit, delicate, in his introduction of his theme, and convincing in handling it. He

begins with a recognition, flattering to his hearers, of their natural and cultivated religious bent, takes his point of departure from one of their own poets—the only quotation of the kind in the New Testament writings—and holds their attention enchained until his reference to the resurrection, a doctrine so repellent to them that with all his skill he cannot hold them longer.

"So Paul stood in the middle of the Areopagus and said, 'Men of Athens, I observe at every turn that you are a most religious people. Why, as I passed along and scanned your objects of worship, I actually came upon an altar with the inscription

TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.

Well, I proclaim to you what you worship in your ignorance. The God who made the world and all things in it, he, as Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in shrines that are made by human hands; he is not served by human hands as if he needed anything, for it is he who gives life and breath and all things to all men. All nations he has created from a common origin, to dwell all over the earth, fixing their allotted periods and the boundaries of their abodes, meaning them to seek for God on the chance of finding him in their groping for him. Though indeed he is close to each one of us, for it is in him that we live and move and exist—as some of your own poets have said,

"We too belong to His race."

Well, as the race of God, we ought not to imagine that the divine nature resembles gold or silver or stone, the product of human art and invention. Such ages of ignorance God overlooked, but he now charges men that they are all everywhere to repent, inasmuch as he has fixed a day on which he will judge the world justly by a man whom he has destined for this. And he has given proof of this to all by raising him from the dead.' "

Recalling the fact that we have here but a very brief digest of what must have been a half hour's or an hour's address, what an effect it nevertheless has upon the mind! One can see at once how adroit it is; but the reference to the resurrection, an idea especially repugnant to the Greek mind, to which St. Paul leads up so carefully, puts an end to the sermon. Most of the Greeks will not hear him further.

There are those who speak of Paul's effort in Athens as a failure. Possibly it was. How can one know, however, what is failure and what is success in the affairs of this complicated world? He made some converts, and although he soon departed from Athens, and, so far as we know, never resumed activity there, or founded a church there, still the Greek world, of which this fair city was the center and soul, was gradually permeated and dominated by the gospel Paul preached on Mars Hill.

AT THE CASTLE OF ANTONIA

A very different address, under very different auspices, in which the Apostle employs very different

tactics, is that made in Jerusalem at the time of his arrest. Cosmopolitan that he is, he employs the Hebrew tongue as fluently as the Greek; and comprehending various sorts of people as he does, he makes the approach to this Jewish mob in a manner no less adroit but far more direct than he had employed at Athens. He begins:

"'I am a Jew, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, but brought up in this city, educated at the feet of Gamaliel in all the strictness of our ancestral Law, ardent for God as you all are to-day. I persecuted this Way of religion to the death, chaining and imprisoning both men and women.'"

Then follows the first of several accounts which he gives of his sudden conversion on the road to Damascus. Paul seems unaware that there was any mental and spiritual preparation for this event in his career; but we are familiar now with many unconscious processes that go forward in our being, and can even discern, at this distance, some of those which took place in him. However that may be, it is in this case the word "Gentiles" that put an end to this address, even as it was the word "resurrection" that terminated the one to the Athenians. When he declared that God called him to carry his message far hence to the Gentiles, the religious intolerance of the Jews broke bounds and they rent garments, threw dust on their heads, and acted like whirling dervishes.

BEFORE AGRIPPA

Subsequently to this, Paul addressed the Jewish Council of Elders, the Great Sanhedrin, and made various defenses before Festus and before Felix, Roman representatives, all of them orations of skill and interest; but perhaps the best of them all, the most logical, broad-minded, and graceful, is the defense before Herod Agrippa. He enters upon his discourse with a delicate compliment to that ruler, employs a quick nervous gesture to capture attention, and argues from Jewish prejudice and Jewish tradition, by way of his own personal experience, to the broad world-wide view of religion he had come to entertain. The beginning and the ending of this masterly address, from Acts twenty-six follows:

"At this Paul stretched out his hand and began his defence. 'I consider myself fortunate, king Agrippa, in being able to defend myself to-day before you against all that the Jews charge me with; for you are well acquainted with all Jewish customs and questions. Pray listen to me then with patience. How I lived from my youth up among my own nation and at Jerusalem, all that early career of mine, is known to all the Jews. They know me of old. They know, if they chose to admit it, that as a Pharisee I lived by the principles of the strictest party in our religion. To-day I am standing my trial for hoping in the promise made by God to our fathers, a promise which our twelve tribes hope to gain by serving God earnestly both night and day. . . . To this day I have had the

help of God in standing, as I now do, to testify alike to low and high, never uttering a single syllable beyond what the prophets and Moses predicted was to take place. Why should you consider it incredible that God raises the dead, that the Christ is capable of suffering, and that he should be the first to rise from the dead and bring the message of light to the People and to the Gentiles?' When he brought this forward in his defence, Festus called out, 'Paul, you are quite mad! Your great learning is driving you insane.' 'Your excellency,' said Paul to Festus, 'I am not mad, I am speaking the sober truth. Why, the king is well aware of this! To the king I can speak without the slightest hesitation. I do not believe any of it has escaped his notice, for this was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, you believe the prophets? I know you do.' 'At this rate,' Agrippa remarked, 'it won't be long before you believe you have made a Christian of me!' 'Long or short,' said Paul, 'I would to God that not only you but all my hearers to-day could be what I am—barring these chains!' "

This address has lent itself many times to declamation by school and college boys, as well as by speakers of maturer years. A trained actor might speak it with even more effect than Hamlet's soliloquy or Mark Antony's oration.

Book Three: PAUL AND HIS WORLD
EVANGEL

Book Three: PAUL AND HIS WORLD EVANGEL

Chapter XIX

PAUL A WRITER OF LETTERS

Paul was the father of Christian literature—the first writer we know anything about to set pen to paper, or stylus to papyrus, in behalf of the new religion. When we think of the gospel of Matthew as the first book of the New Testament, we are thinking logically and not chronologically. The Thessalonian letters of St. Paul are the earliest Christian writings that have come down to us in their original form. The "logia," or "oracles," of Jesus may have been reduced to writing from memory by hearers or from short-hand notes—stenography existed among Greeks and Romans in that day—and even some of the incidents in his life may have been written down; but our best information is that the four gospels, in their present form, are later than most, if not all, of the letters of St. Paul. He is the earliest of Christian writers.

Moreover, he invented much of the phraseology and worked out most of the philosophy of Christianity, which has endured to this day. His words have embedded themselves in religious speech until they have become a part of us; and we utter them unthinkingly,

such as "Justification by faith," "The Lord's Supper," "Communion," "In Christ," and the benedictions still used in public worship. These and a host of other phrases, which drop unconsciously and glibly from the tongues of Christians, are not only found for the first time in the writings of Paul, but were fashioned by him.

At the same time, he developed a system of theology to fit under the new structure of the church. Jesus never devised a system. It is as if he had built a beautiful airy structure, poetic and true, but floating, as it were, until Paul dug down to the rock below, put in the undergirders, and laid the masonry.

The mind of Paul, philosophic, scientific, whether by nature or training, insisted upon system, order; and he strove until he got it. Besides, the construction of the churches rested upon him. He must lay the plans upon which orderly and progressive building must be done; and every administrative faculty leaped into play. He shows rare versatility.

All this, while he carries on the most laborious of lives. Fond of travel, perhaps, and urged by his mission, more likely, he hurries from city to city, land to land, continent to continent, over deserts, seas, or military roads, and at the same time does the greatest thinking of his age—perhaps it is safe to say the greatest religious thinking of any age. Other men have performed labors as Herculean as his; other missionaries, like Xavier, Livingstone, and Judson, have shot their jagged journeys like lightning flashes from side to side of darkened peninsulas and continents; but where is there a David Livingstone or a Francis

Xavier, who, along with these practical and wearing works, has at the same time sent forth, during journeys or between them, a systematized theology, clothed in a new set of enduring words?

Of course the inspiration of God moves back of these achievements. It passes our thinking to declare just what this inspiration is, when and where and how it works. God inspires good men to good deeds, and great writers to great writings. God has always inspired and continues, let us hope, to inspire statesmen, poets, thinkers. It would be sad to believe that God entered human hearts in one age and ceased to visit them in another. The inspiration of God is too deep and mysterious for us to define, describe, and tabulate. We cannot always say of it, lo here, and lo there; for, like the kingdom of God, it is among us, sometimes within us; and it is futile to disagree about it. Paul is inspired of God, nothing less. A genius—and inspired!

The works of Paul consist of ten to thirteen letters to individuals and churches which, for the most part, he had founded. We cannot say definitely ten, because there is fairly good authority for believing that he wrote all thirteen that bear his name; neither can we definitely declare for thirteen, because there is good evidence against two or three of the shorter letters. Nevertheless, it is conceded that even these contain much that is Pauline in thought and manner, even if not actually written in entirety by him. So, for the practical purpose of estimating his prose and poetry, we are safe in proceeding on the assumption that his works comprise the whole thirteen.

Paul probably wrote other letters that have not come down to us. We know he wrote a third one to the church at Corinth, which is now missing. He may well have written others, which are lost. We are fortunate indeed in possessing these thirteen. Here then is the material we are to estimate: First and Second Thessalonians, letters of the Advent, or second coming, written during the second missionary journey about 52 A.D.; First and Second Corinthians, Galatians and Romans, which may be called the theological epistles, written during the third missionary journey, about five years later than the first group, say, 56-57 A.D.; Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, letters exalting the person of the Christ, dating from the Roman imprisonment, another five years later, which is about 62-63 A.D.; and finally First and Second Timothy and Titus, the pastoral epistles, having to do with the care and oversight of the churches, written, perhaps during a second imprisonment at Rome, about 65-67 A.D.

The dates roughly correspond to the years of Paul's age, since he probably was born about the same time as our Lord. His death must have fallen about 64 to 67 A.D. as, according to tradition, he was beheaded in the reign of Nero. As an aid to memory, it may be observed that the groups are about five years apart.

It interests one to note that his literary activity began after he had passed the half-century mark, so far as any work of his that has come down to us is concerned, and continued for some fourteen or fifteen years. It is, moreover, interesting that the largest part of the contents of our New Testament is made

up of personal letters; and by far the largest part of these letters are by St. Paul. Struck off at white heat, dictated and often not even revised, emergency messages, they have assumed a place among the sacred books of our religion.

Insignificant we should to-day consider those churches which Paul addressed. Not among the rich and powerful their people, but among the poor, the obscure, even the criminal and outcast elements of society. They resembled, these little knots of Christians, nothing else in our day quite so much as the feeble little rescue missions in the slum sections of our great cities. To such assemblies as these, for the most part, Paul sends his hastily written messages.

Just casual letters, these, written to meet an instant need, to encourage a battered and persecuted little band of Christians in the purlieus of some great city, or to set right the vagaries of thought of others, to compose differences and quarrels here, or to render affectionate thanks for some favor done there. Yet how long-lived and absorbing they have proved to centuries of time and millions of people.

We have read the lives and letters of many men, from antiquity even to our own day. We love to ponder such letters, for they reveal so many things about the writer and his times. Very early in classical days the fashion of circulating such letters began; and even now the presses send out volumes of them. How well, in comparison, we could dispense with all the personal letters ever published rather than to give up, let us say, Paul's epistle to the Corinthians, to the Romans, to the Philippians.

Chapter XX

WHAT SHAPED PAUL'S STYLE

St. Paul, like the other New Testament writers, wrote in Greek. Little, however, is lost in flavor in the passing over into English, because of the skill and care and even genius of our translators. Nevertheless something inevitably must be sacrificed if one confines himself exclusively to the English version. The Greek was peculiarly fit for Paul's use. There are passages in which the ring of the original, its sensitiveness, delicacy, and pliability are essential to the highest appreciation; but, after all, we have in our own tongue all the best of it.

Fortunate, indeed, for Paul that Alexander had gone everywhere planting Greek colonies to spread the tongue which became all but universal. A tongue it was, of such flexibility, so adapted to convey the delicate shades of meaning contained in the spiritual thinking of the Apostle and his new religion, so fitted to philosophical and theological discussion, as well as to exalted feeling and even rhapsody, as no other language has ever quite been.

Fortunate, further, for the great Traveler and Missionary that the Roman Eagles had gone everywhere, settling the lands to law and order, unrolling the wide white stone roads and guarding them, establishing sea routes and policing them, to render safe and rapid the progress of the new faith along the arteries of

the world. It is trite to say, though we here need to remember it, that Rome conquered Greece and ruled it; and that Greece in turn conquered Rome and prescribed its thought and scholarship, as well as the language in which to clothe them. So Paul, seeing these things, could well speak of "the fulness of the times," for the ushering in of his new gospel. Alexander was a sort of unconscious John the Baptist for the Apostle Paul; for, with the equally unwitting help of Rome, he had practically Grecianized the ancient world.

Although Paul understood, as all rabbis and most Jews in general did, the Hebrew scriptures, it is from the Septuagint, or Greek version, that he most often quotes and with which he seems most closely familiar. Doubtless the long habit of using Greek had grown upon him; for he had been some fourteen years a Christian before he began to write. Furthermore it is practically always to people using the Greek tongue that he writes. One ought, therefore, to bear this all-important fact in mind in studying Paul's style,—that these are Greek writings.

Furthermore, Paul dictated his letters, another fact that bears much upon matters of style. With the exception of the Galatian letter, which, through stress of emotion or for some other unexplained reason, he wrote with his own hand, as he himself declares, and with the exception of the final salutation and signature which he always appended to every letter as a sign of genuineness, his epistles are given by word of mouth to some ready writer. Why he adopted this method has caused much speculation; and varied are the conjectures to explain it. Possibly the busy

life he led, the limitation of his time, the necessity of toiling with his own hands to support himself, forced him to dictate to a more facile amanuensis. Possibly his poor eyesight in advancing years—although it is not certain that his sight was defective—may have influenced him. When he wrote to the Galatians he apologized for his large handwriting, saying: "See what big letters I make when I write to you in my own hand!"—not "how long a letter." This may have been from nearsightedness. So also may have been his failure to recognize the High Priest when Paul hotly turns on him in the council chamber at Jerusalem and cries: "You whitewashed wall, God will strike you!" then apologizes in the next breath, saying: "I did not know he was high priest." Possibly the solution may be found in the fact that Paul was a poor penman, and writing materials scarce, dear, and not to be wasted with large childish handwriting.

Many a man before Paul and since was a poor penman. Some one has said good penmanship is in inverse ratio to greatness. We may picture St. Paul, in a brief breathing spell, between sessions of elders, or on the low stool of the tent-maker's shop, his thin arms deep in the strong-smelling hair of the goats, or in camp by the wayside, under a torch flickering in the wind of the desert or the sea, pouring forth his thoughts—well considered thoughts—his admonitions, his exhortations, to his beloved children in the faith a hundred or a thousand miles away. Then, to guard against imposture, as attempts had been made to forge letters, "purporting to come from me" (II Thess. II: 2) he takes the papyrus into his own hand, scrawls

a hasty personal word or two, perhaps a salutation or a benediction, and signs his name.

In one instance, the Roman letter, the amanuensis naïvely inserts a paragraph in his own name, saying: "I Tertius, who wrote this epistle, salute you in the Lord." Immediately we begin to imagine the personal characteristics of the scribe, Tertius, his eagerness and his pardonable pride in his work, as well as the large charity and kindliness of St. Paul in permitting the pretty pomposity of the insertion. Thus is the name of Tertius rescued from oblivion and sent alive across two millenniums!

Dictation affects style. Undoubtedly dictation accounts for many of St. Paul's long and involved sentences, parentheses, circumlocutions, qualifying clauses. Several exegetes have wished that Paul had written his own letters all with his own hands, so they might the more easily fathom his meaning. A good instance of the broken style which flowed from dictation is found in the opening of the Galatian letter, which is affected also by intense feeling:

"Paul an apostle—not appointed by men nor commissioned by any man but by Jesus Christ and God the Father who raised him from the dead,—with all the brothers who are beside me, to the churches of Galatia; grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil world—by the will of our God and Father, to whom be glory for ever and ever: Amen. I am astonished you are hastily shifting like this, deserting Him who called you by

Christ's grace and going over to another gospel. It simply means that certain individuals are unsettling you; they want to distort the gospel of Christ. Now even though it were myself or some angel from heaven, whoever preaches a gospel that contradicts the gospel I preached to you, God's curse be on him! I have said it before and I now repeat it: whoever preaches a gospel to you that contradicts the gospel you have already received, God's curse be on him! Now is that 'appealing to the interests of men' or of God? Trying to 'satisfy men'? Why, if I still tried to give satisfaction to human masters, I would be no servant of Christ."

Moreover, the dictation was evidently done rapidly, and the letters sent away with little or no revision. Paul begins a statement, then qualifies it so much that it becomes quite a different statement from that which he started to make. Thus in the first chapter of First Corinthians, with some intensity and even asperity, he cries: "I am thankful now that I baptized none of you, except Crispus and Gaius, so that no one can say you were baptized in my name. (Well, I did baptize the household of Stephanas; but no one else, as far as I remember.)" He starts out declaring emphatically that he baptized none, and when he finishes he is not sure, and neither are we, but that he may have baptized a dozen or so. Had he rewritten or carefully revised that letter, or had stationery not been too precious, he would probably have cast the sentence quite differently.

Sometimes, therefore, Paul grows prolix, involved

and even tedious, in his desire for scrupulous accuracy. Many persons have proved poor story-tellers, halting and slow, on account of this very innate honesty. General Grant, they say, prosed along most drowsily, as a narrator, while he searched his memory for the minutest detail, as if he should say: *"No,* the canteen was not on the east side of the tent. I picked it up on the west. No, I believe it was at the rear. I am not quite sure. Anyway it is of no consequence. As I was about to say—" In his writings, however, in which Grant had time to revise and reshape and polish, he is admirably simple and lucid and direct —a model of style. So, doubtless, might Paul have been but for rapid dictation. A thing that is easily read is not often easily written. The easier the reading, the more laborious the writing. There are many sentences which prove that St. Paul rather lost his whereabouts, after starting, as other thoughts came crowding in. He found himself again, as he always does, and came out where he intended to, but only after considerable labor.

Naturally it follows, both from the method of writing and from the purpose of the writings, that the language of the Apostle is largely colloquial in character. He writes as he would have talked, indeed as he did talk. His readers are his friends, his children in the faith, and he sees them before him, their familiar faces clouded or glowing according to whether his words contained reproof or praise. Consequently his writings sound often like speaking, preaching or conversation. At other times, all the care and revision possible could not have improved the polished beauty

of his periods. There are times when, although like Ruskin at the close of his chapters, Paul sings with a wrapt and exalted enthusiasm, nevertheless it would appear that each sentence had been chiseled and polished to the last degree of refinement. If Webster worked for nineteen years on that one sentence in his great "extempore" speech, "liberty and union, one and inseparable, now and forever," one would think that in the Arabian deserts, Paul, for fourteen years, may have hummed over in the dusky, starlit nights the hymn to Charity, ending: "Thus 'faith and hope and love last on, these three,' but the greatest of all is love."

Ordinary literary standards therefore must be applied with care and caution to much of the work of St. Paul. A great deal of it scarcely possesses style at all. Scholarship, too, may err, through failure to remember the purely epistolary, the dictated, character of the work. The genuineness of an epistle, for example, cannot justly be impeached because of the appearance of new and strange words and phrases not found in other letters. Such words are frequent in the language of the markets, the streets, and the highways, which he employs. His is the common talk of common men, not the language of scientists, scholars, writers of treatises, and essayists. To a writer on systematic theology, the test of "words used only once" might fairly be applied, in searching for genuineness; but not to one whose informal letters are thrilling and throbbing with the electric touch of life. Circumstances of time and place, or readers and writer, are too various.

Chapter XXI

PAUL'S PLAN OF AN EPISTLE

Before attempting more minutely to analyze the style of the Apostle, it is worth while to consider the usual outline of a Pauline letter, which is somewhat as follows:

First: there is the salutation from the writer to the readers. Following the usual custom in the correspondence of the day, St. Paul places the name of the writer at the beginning instead of at the end of his letter; but there is with him more than the conventional salutation. He improves the occasion for a human touch, which one can scarcely define, but which one writer possesses and another lacks. Sometimes his salutation breathes a sort of majesty, and one can almost see the grand old man as he makes his bow to the church or the person he is addressing. Here is his greeting to the Ephesians:

"Paul, by the will of God an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the saints who are faithful in Jesus Christ: grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The current Greek inscription to a letter is, in Paul's case, expanded into a sort of benediction. He gives his own name and, except in the case of the Thessalonian letters, his first ones, adds some title or qualify-

ing or explanatory word or phrase, as "Apostle," or "Servant of Jesus Christ," usually with the purpose of affirming unmistakably his apostleship and equal dignity with the twelve. Sometimes he styles himself the "Bond Servant of Jesus Christ," or the "Prisoner of Christ," sometimes only the "Servant of Christ." In his only strictly private epistle, that to Philemon, he pathetically terms himself simply "a prisoner of Jesus Christ." Here is a greeting full of majesty, to the Church at Corinth, at the beginning of his first letter:

"Paul, called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, with brother Sosthenes, to the church of God at Corinth, to those who are consecrated in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, as well as to all who, wherever they may be, invoke the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord no less than ours: grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

Second comes a Thanksgiving for the faith and endurance of his converts, for the grace of God and all that it has brought to the beloved people to whom he writes. He can usually find something to be glad about, to give thanks for. Sometimes he adds a prayer for the continued endurance of his people under stress of persecution, or for other things which he earnestly desires for them. One of the most touching of these is at the opening of Second Corinthians:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of

all comfort, who comforts me in all my distress, so that I am able to comfort people who are in any distress by the comfort with which I myself am comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ are abundant in my case, so my comfort is also abundant through Christ. If I am in distress, it is in the interests of your comfort and salvation; if I am comforted, it is in the interests of your comfort, which is effective as it nerves you to endure the same sufferings as I suffer myself. Hence my hope for you is well-founded, since I know that as you share the sufferings you share the comfort also.

"Now I would like you to know about the distress which befell me in Asia, brothers. I was crushed, crushed far more than I could stand, so much so that I despaired even of life; in fact I told myself it was the sentence of death. But that was to make me rely not on myself but on the God who raises the dead; he rescued me from so terrible a death, he rescues still, and I rely upon him for the hope that he will continue to rescue me. Let me have your co-operation in prayer, so that many a soul may render thanks to him on my behalf for the boon which many have been the means of him bestowing on myself."

So far as his letters addressed to churches are concerned, only in the Galatian letter is this Thanksgiving omitted. Here it is superseded by censure, denunciation, anathema, upon those who had removed the foolish Galatians so soon from their faith. This letter is a warlike one, and Paul loses no time in forcing the fighting. In two personal letters,—the first to

Timothy, and the one to Titus,—the Thanksgiving is omitted, and the Apostle begins at once with eager exhortations to his son in the faith. The form of the Thanksgiving varies greatly. Now it is brief, now it is long, exhaustive, and deeply earnest.

Third and Fourth are the two main portions of the letter—doctrinal and practical. Here St. Paul grapples with whatever difficulties he knows the church to be facing, advising means and measures, or offers whatever exhortation or encouragement is most needed. Sometimes before, sometimes after the practical comes the doctrinal discussion, the elaboration of those great principles of systematic theology by which the church is guided to this day. Let us take an instance of each,—the doctrinal and the practical. In the eleventh of Romans, in which Paul is addressing Gentile converts, is an excellent example of Paul's theological manner, with one of his most characteristic and vivid images, that of the wild olive:

"If the first handful of dough is consecrated, so is the rest of the lump; if the root is consecrated, so are the branches. Supposing some of the branches have been broken off, while you have been grafted in like a shoot of wild olive to share the rich growth of the olive-stem, do not pride yourself at the expense of these branches. Remember, in your pride, the stem supports you, not you the stem. You will say, 'But branches were broken off to let me be grafted in!' Granted. They were broken off—for their lack of faith. And you owe your position to your faith. You should feel awed instead of being uplifted. For

if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either."

The twelfth of Romans, immediately following and clinching the argument, is practical; but for variety's sake, let us take an extract from the fifth and sixth chapters of Galatians:

"But the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, good temper, kindliness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control."

"Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

These sections, doctrinal and practical, are not always separated one from the other, but are sometimes intermingled. In occasional instances one or the other may be omitted; but in general both are present.

Fifth come the specific exhortations and greetings to individuals fitted to the peculiar conditions of the particular church he is addressing. As he nears the end of an epistle, Paul always becomes increasingly conscious that he is pastor to the flock, that it needs his guidance and admonition; therefore the arrow flights of short, pithy suggestion. These piercing exhortations are pointed and barbed with the keenest common sense and worldly wisdom. He becomes all things to all men.

These informal, personal greetings to persons to whom Paul especially desires to be remembered, or from persons with whom he is associated who wish to send their salutations to those in the church he is addressing, very human and kindly, bridge for us the

gulf of centuries with a sense of fellow-feeling and remind us that personal ties long ago in the Roman Empire thrilled across separation and exile as they do to-day.

Sixth and last comes the apostolic benediction, varied in form, now brief and business-like, now expanded and sonorous, as if the great Apostle had extended his hands over his hearers in blessing. These benedictions are so appropriate and so happy in their phrasing that we have never got away from them, but use them to close our services to this day.

Here are contrasted examples:

To the Galatians Paul pithily says in good-by:

"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen."

To the Romans, his voice rings out like a bell in dignity and majesty, in balance and harmony:

"Now to Him who can strengthen you by my gospel, by the preaching of Jesus Christ, by revealing the secret purpose which after the silence of long ages has now been disclosed and made known on the basis of the prophetic scriptures (by command of the eternal God) to all the Gentiles for their obedience to the faith—to the only wise God be glory through Jesus Christ for ever and ever: Amen."

There is, of course, variation from the order of these six portions of an epistle,—Paul is often hurried and unsystematic, to be sure; but in the main this is the order upon which a Pauline letter may be said to proceed.

Chapter XXII

LITERARY GRANDEUR OF PAUL

Coming now more properly to the literary style of Paul, we cannot too often be impressed with the fact that he is writing personal letters, not books, or treatises. His writing therefore is purely informal, colloquial, familiar. Yet this does not justify us in going so far as some go in declaring that, "it is hazardous to speak of a Pauline style," and that "the subjects on which he writes are too varied, the moods that influence him too changing, while the freedom of the epistolary form hinders all approach to a fixed and characteristic style."

We are perfectly justifiable in saying that he is far from being always a model of style. It is certainly true that his writing is changeable as the most sensitive and capricious day in April—now lowering with clouds, now pouring in tender showers, now blowing with fierce reminders of winter, now shining with the gold of summer sunshine—but to say that Paul had no style is going too far. You could scarcely fail to detect an epistle of his by its earmarks if there were no superscription. You can readily distinguish between his writing, for example, and that of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

Certain it is, however, that Paul did not attempt literary excellence. He is very far from polishing his periods or paying great heed to the form and manner

of conveying his thoughts. No sewing on of purple patches, no painting in of cypress trees! It is thought he is after. Of the form he is unconscious. Where he sings, it is because the thought sings in him. Where his language soars, it is because the thought has wings. Where he chooses words of such power and simplicity that no amount of careful study could alter them to advantage, it is because the thought inspires him, makes him a seer in the forests of words, and infallible in his choice.

In fact he does not claim excellency of speech. He tells his Corinthians that he did not come in that way, but determined to know nothing among them save Christ and him crucified. And it is this very devotion to high purpose, this disregard of the clothing of his thought, that gives him power. This has been the salvation of many a man's literary style. Devotion to a purpose with a deep feeling of responsibility has kept many a writer and speaker simple who might have been artificial; plain and forceful, who might have been bombastic; direct, who might have been diffuse. Many persons who can talk like plain honest men begin to strut and swagger and put on self-conscious airs as soon as pen touches paper. Only a message can cure such. Many a man's style has been saved by his message. So Abraham Lincoln. So John Bunyan. So Paul of Tarsus.

Paul's very disregard of the rules of composition—even if he knew them—adding sometimes to the roughness of his sentences, adds often also to their power and eloquence. A single example—who would part with those sentences in which he piles one genitive on

top of another so that the English translation gives four or more prepositional phrases immediately following each other:

"The knowledge of God's glory in the face of Christ" (II Cor. IV:6).

"The light thrown by the gospel of the glory of Christ" (II Cor. IV:4).

Limping style it may be, but noble eloquence.

Stalker says: "Nowhere perhaps will there be found so exact a parallel to the style of Paul as in the letters and speeches of Oliver Cromwell. In the Protector's brain there lay the best and truest thoughts about England and her complicated affairs which existed at the time among Englishmen; but when he tried to express them in speech or letter there issued from his mind the most extraordinary mixture of exclamations, questions, arguments, soon losing themselves in sands of words, unwieldy parentheses, and subduing eloquence.

"Yet, as you read these amazing utterances, you come by degrees to feel that you are getting to see the very heart and soul of the Puritan era, and that you would rather be beside this man than any other representative of the period. Perhaps, indeed, a certain formlessness is a natural accompaniment of the very highest originality. When great thoughts are for the first time coming forth there is a kind of primordial roughness about them, as if the earth out of which they are arising were still clinging to them; the polishing of the gold comes late and has to be preceded by the heaving of the ore out of the bowels of nature. Paul in his

writings is hurling forth the original ore of truth."

Illustrations of this fact come out of our memories of literature with Emerson, Carlyle, Montaigne, down to Bernard Shaw and Knut Hamsun. New and original thought, new and original art, besides its frequent formlessness, develops power to put the world by the ears, to upset men, foment differences among them, and serve as a divider before it becomes a uniter.

To analyze Paul's sentence structure, the figures of speech, the little ways and manners, unconsciously performed, will present the salient literary characteristics of our Apostle. Reference has already been made to the long involved sentences, modifying phrases and clauses, the parentheses, which reveal the overflowing abundance of the thoughts of Paul. He begins with an idea, and presently a whole troop of associates comes flocking in from all sides to entangle his subject or predicate, to overpower it, while his sentence structure, staggering under the weight, drops shattered to the ground. How full must have been his mind, since he produced three such books as Galatians, Second Corinthians, and Romans in six months' time, and that, too, amid his other constant and absorbing activities. Sometimes, with Paul, a single sentence was no light thing.

Turn to the third chapter of Ephesians and read the first paragraph. There are three sentences covering thirteen verses; and two of them cover twelve verses:

"For this reason I Paul, I whom Jesus has made a prisoner for the sake of you Gentiles—for surely you

have heard how the grace of God which was vouchsafed me in your interests has ordered it, how the divine secret was disclosed to me by a revelation (if you read what I have already written briefly about this, you can understand my insight into that secret of Christ which was not disclosed to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his sacred apostles and prophets by the Spirit), namely, that in Christ Jesus the Gentiles are co-heirs, companions, and co-partners in the Promise. Such is the gospel which I was called to serve by the endowment of God's grace which was vouchsafed me, by the energy of his power; less than the least of all saints as I am, this grace was vouchsafed me, that I should bring the Gentiles the gospel of the fathomless wealth of Christ and enlighten all men upon the new order of that divine secret which God the Creator of all concealed from eternity—intending to let the full sweep of the divine wisdom be disclosed now by the church to the angelic Rulers and Authorities in the heavenly sphere, in terms of the eternal purpose which he has realized in Christ Jesus our Lord, through whom, as we have faith in him, we enjoy our confidence of free access. So I beg of you not to lose heart over what I am suffering on your behalf; my sufferings are an honour to you."

It is difficult to read this passage aloud; yet it is touching, sincere, exalted.

Not all of his sentences, however, are thus formless. Many of them are balanced and skillfully poised. The fact that there was, among Greek rhetoricians, a

studied manner of forming sentences, does not indicate that Paul followed their artificiality of style or was educated in their methods. At the River Styx, the famous waterman is represented as saying to a rhetorician just stepping into the boat: "You must strip off all that boundless length of sentences that is wrapped round you, and those antitheses of yours, and balancing of clauses, and strange expressions, and all the other heavy weights of speech or you will make my boat heavy." But Lucian would not have included Paul's natural and impulsive periods in his satire. In the first chapter of First Corinthians we read:

"Why, look at your own ranks, my brothers; not many wise men (that is, judged by human standards), not many leading men, not many of good birth, have been called:

No,
God has chosen what is foolish in the world
to shame the wise;
God has chosen what is weak in the world
to shame what is strong;
God has chosen what is mean and despised in the world—
things which are not, to put down things that are;
that no person may boast in the sight of God."

"Knowledge puffs up, love builds up" (I Cor. VIII: 1).

"To Greeks and to barbarians, to wise and to fool-

ish alike, I owe a duty. Hence my eagerness to preach the gospel to you in Rome as well" (Rom. I: 14-15).

Well-balanced and periodic sentences appear in the hymn to love in First Corinthians, thirteen:

"I may speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
but if I have no love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal;
I may prophesy, fathom all mysteries and secret lore,
I may have such absolute faith that I can move hills
from their place,
but if I have no love,
I count for nothing;
I may distribute all I possess in charity,
I may give up my body to be burnt,
but if I have no love,
I make nothing of it.
Love is very patient, very kind. Love knows no jealousy; love makes no parade, gives itself no airs, is never rude, never selfish, never irritated, never resentful; love is never glad when others go wrong, love is gladdened by goodness, always slow to expose, always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient. Love never disappears. As for prophesying, it will be superseded; as for 'tongues,' they will cease; as for knowledge, it will be superseded. For we only know bit by bit, and we only prophesy bit by bit; but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will be superseded. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I argued like a child; now that I am a man, I am done with childish ways.

At present we only see the baffling reflections in a
mirror,
but then it will be face to face;
at present I am learning bit by bit,
but then I shall understand, as all along I have
myself been understood.
Thus 'faith and hope and love last on, these three,'
but the greatest of all is love."

One would think, indeed, that this whole chapter had passed under the hand of the lapidary. It is polished, refined, so that a stroke of the chisel, or even a single finger-touch, would mar its perfect beauty. Yet it was dictated, dashed off hurriedly, to an amanuensis. Perhaps, however, it is a passage that Paul had often declaimed by word of mouth in sermon or address, the result of long thought and use.

Sometimes the method of balance or contrast is carried so far as the paradox. This appears in First Corinthians, seven:

"I mean, brothers,—
the interval has been shortened;
so let those who have wives live as if they had none,
let mourners live as if they were not mourning,
let the joyful live as if they had no joy,
let buyers live as if they had no hold on their goods,
let those who mix in the world live as if they were
not engrossed in it,
for the present phase of things is passing away."

An oft-quoted and artistic passage, as well as an

appealing one, is found in the "Love-letter to the Philippians," fourth chapter:

"Finally, brothers, keep in mind whatever is true, whatever is worthy, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is attractive, whatever is high-toned, all excellence, all merit."

The nervous quality of the style appears often in the rhetorical question and exclamation. These tell strongly, produce excellent effect. Spice and tang come from them and reveal the eagerness and earnestness of the writer.

"What can ever part us from Christ's love?"
"When God acquits, who shall condemn?"
"Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!"
"Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

St. Paul is fond of employing a climax of three short, sharp, crisp words, phrases, or statements, like three steps leading up to a point of vantage:

"All belongs to you; and you belong to Christ, and Christ to God."
"I have fought in the good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith."
"Thus 'faith and hope and love last on, these three,' but the greatest of all is love."

These little climaxes of three might be multiplied almost indefinitely. Three is a favorite number with

preachers; they are happy when their subject falls into three divisions; they are conscious of a certain satisfaction, as most public speakers are, when a sentence contains three terms, phrases, or clauses, which grow larger toward the end. Paul is no exception. Yet he employs four steps, at times, to reach his eminence, instead of three, as:

"Watch, stand firm in the faith, play the man, be strong!"

Sometimes his climax is longer, and musically grander, as he slowly lifts himself and his reader to an exalted height:

"What can ever part us from Christ's love? Can anguish or calamity or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or the sword? (Because, as it is written,

" 'For thy sake we are being killed all the day long,
we are counted as sheep to be slaughtered.')

"No, in all this we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am certain neither death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, neither the present nor the future, no powers of the Height or of the Depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to part us from God's love in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Then there is the funeral chant in First Corinthians, fifteen, like the dead march from Saul:

"Here is a secret truth for you: not all of us are to die, but all of us are to be changed—changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet-call. The trumpet will sound, the dead will rise imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishing body must be invested with the imperishable, and this mortal body invested with immortality; and when this mortal body has been invested with immortality, then the saying of Scripture will be realized,

"Death is swallowed up in victory.

"O Death, where is your victory?

"O Death, where is your sting?

"The victory is ours, thank God! He makes it ours by our Lord Jesus Christ. Well then, my beloved brothers, hold your ground, immovable; abound in work for the Lord at all times, for you may be sure that in the Lord your labour is never thrown away."

Some think that the last verse of this chapter should have been made the first verse of the next—"Well then, my beloved brothers, hold your ground, immovable"—for it is practical exhortation and belongs with the subject of the "collection for the saints" and other more mundane affairs of the sixteenth chapter. St. Paul did not divide his writings into chapters and verses; somebody else did this, far down in the centuries, purely arbitrarily and for the sake of convenient reference; and the divisions are at times not only uninspired, but stupid.

There is nothing more touching, more noble, in Paul's writings than his charge to his son in the faith, Timothy, written near the end, in the prison at Rome:

"In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead, in the light of his appearance and his reign, I adjure you to preach the word; keep at it in season and out of season, refuting, checking, and exhorting men; never lose patience with them, and never give up your teaching, for the time will come when people will decline to be taught sound doctrine and will accumulate teachers to suit themselves and tickle their own fancies; they will give up listening to the Truth and turn to myths.

"Whatever happens, be self-possessed, flinch from no suffering, do your work as an evangelist, and discharge all your duties as a minister.

"The last drops of my own sacrifice are falling; my time to go has come. I have fought in the good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith. Now the crown of a good life awaits me, with which the Lord, that just Judge, will reward me on the great Day—and not only me but all who have loved and longed for his appearance."

Chapter XXIII

SOME OF PAUL'S LITERARY WAYS

The use of quotation by St. Paul stands out conspicuous for its rarity. To be sure he quotes now and again from the Old Testament, and always from the Septuagint, or Greek version; but never from classic authors except in the address at Athens, in which he is reported as saying:

> "As some of your own poets have said,
> 'We too belong to His race.'"

Of the quotations from the Old Testament, as indeed of Hebrew history in general, he makes the same peculiar rabbinical uses that his early companions, the Pharisees and scribes of the law, were accustomed to do. In short, he rabbinizes, employs what amounts to a figure of speech of its own kind—a most remarkable bending and twisting of the text to suit his immediate end. In Jewish ears there rasped no offense in this queer ingenious figure; quite to the contrary it had convincing, pleasing value.

Thus he tells (I Cor. X) how the fathers in Israel were all "baptized into Moses by the cloud and by the sea." We had thought they escaped the sea, and were led by the cloud. Then he further avers that "all drank the same supernatural drink (drinking from the supernatural Rock which accompanied them—and that Rock was Christ)." We remember something about

Moses smiting a rock from which gushed water for thirsty Israel; but we do not recall that the rock followed them, rolled along behind them through the wilderness of Sinai. Still less do we remember that Christ ever identified himself with that rock. This poetic license, if you please to term it such,—perhaps theological license were better,—is unconvincing to a western mind. We ought to keep ourselves aware in reading the Scriptures that they were written by orientals and that we cannot always appreciate the fine points of their reasoning or their style.

Another remarkable example of this favorite figure of the rabbis occurs in the matter of the veil over the face of Moses, as set forth in the Second Corinthian letter. We had always supposed from the Hebrew account, that Moses had placed the veil over his countenance because Israel could not bear the shining face of him who had so recently talked with God; but Paul tells us the veil was there so that Israel might not detect the fading of the glory, might keep them "from gazing at the last rays of a fading glory." Then in the next breath, the veil is transferred to the eyes of Israel so that their minds are to this day blinded in the reading of the Old Testament. Presently the veil is over their hearts and not to be done away except in Christ. In fact the veil floats around from the face of Moses to the eyes of Israel and then to their hearts, until we are mystified as to just what is its location; but that is all due only to the literal and material tendency to accuracy in our occidental minds.

Still another case in point is the use made of the story of Hagar and Sarah in Galatians as typical, re-

spectively, of Sinai and the Jerusalem of this earth in comparison with the Jerusalem above. The bondwoman's children are set over against those of the free woman to illustrate the separation between the old covenant and the new. It is all very interesting, but to us somewhat elusive.

Repetition is a favorite expedient of St. Paul when he wishes very definitely and forcefully to drive home an idea, as if by stroke on stroke with a hammer. He pounds a word in and clinches it. What a loss it would be, too, if by any possibility there should be shaken out of heart and memory such a passage as that in Second Corinthians, first chapter, in which the word comfort or consolation is repeated either as verb or noun ten times in four verses:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts me in all my distress, so that I am able to comfort people who are in any distress by the comfort with which I myself am comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ are abundant in my case, so my comfort is also abundant through Christ. If I am in distress, it is in the interests of your comfort and salvation; if I am comforted, it is in the interests of your comfort, which is effective as it nerves you to endure the same sufferings as I suffer myself. Hence my hope for you is well-founded, since I know that as you share the sufferings you share the comfort also."

In the English translation, the word glory, and its

adjective glorious likewise occur ten times in four verses in II Cor. III. So the contrast between "Seen and Unseen," in II Cor. V.

"For those of us whose eyes are on the unseen, not on the seen; for the seen is transient, the unseen eternal."

If Paul desires that you shall not forget something he seeks to tell you, he sees to it that you shall not forget. Little cares he for the effect on style, which after all is not bad, and which is deliberately sought by so eminent and fastidious a stylist as Matthew Arnold in that essay, for example, where "sweetness and light" is hammered home until the nail-head is buried in memory.

Paul likes to play upon words, in short to pun. This tendency is with him almost as pronounced as with Shakespeare. Of course this juggling with words does not develop in the English version, but appears only in the original. A hint of it, however, may be caught in Romans III: 1-3:

"Then what is the Jew's superiority? . . . Much in every way. This to begin with—Jews were entrusted (*entrusted*) with the scriptures of God. Even supposing some of them have proved untrustworthy (were *without faith*), is their faithlessness (*want of faith*) to cancel the faithfulness (*faithfulness*) of God?"

The italicized words here are all of one root; and

Paul plays upon it four times. Another instance is Galatians V:7:

"Who was it that prevented you from *obeying the Truth?* That sort of *suasion* does not come from Him who called you!"

Italics again indicate the play upon the word.

Certain lines of St. Paul ring out with an almost Homeric onomatopoetic value. Who does not remember how his Greek professor—if the student were fortunate in possessing one with a big personality and a sonorous voice—used to intone the lines of the Iliad, beating them out with a ruler or a pointer until you could hear the twang of the bowstring or the rolling of the waves. Homer had no monopoly in this music of tongue. While Paul doubtless sought consciously no such aim, nevertheless his words sometimes sound like the objects of which he writes.

Perhaps this copying of sounds into words comes as second nature to a musical soul whose business it is to deal in words. An artist is an artist, whether conscious of his genius or not; and Paul is sensitive to sound and color. Here again, of course, one cannot quite carry over into English the onomatopoeia; but a bit of it appears, for example, in I Cor. XIII:

"I may speak with the tongues of men and of angels,
but if I have no love,
I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal."

The vivid concreteness of the metaphors of Paul cannot be overlooked. His figures of speech are at times startling:

"If you snap at each other and prey upon each other, take care in case you destroy one another."

Everybody is familiar with the wild dogs of oriental cities, the shaggy, ragged, homeless beasts who scavenge the gutters, and serve in place of a sewerage system. Modern travelers know them in Constantinople and Damascus; know their heart-hunger, so great that one does not dare pet one of them for fear a hundred will come fawning at him; and know how they have their own sections of the city, their particular hunting-grounds, with boundaries fixed, beyond which they dare not range lest their neighbors set on them and tear them to bits. These wild dogs furnish Paul his figure. The Galatian churches, factional and fighting, would rend and tear each other to pieces if they kept up their conflicts.

Again: "Miserable wretch that I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Rom. VII: 24).

Here the figure of speech suggests a corpse, stiff and cold, heavy and hard, bound upon one's shoulders, from which one cannot shake himself free. Sin feels just as revolting as that; the sense of sin, just as depressing. The story goes that in the Siberian mines, under the old Russian régime, prisoners worked two and two, chained together and left alone in remote galleries for days at a time with a bit of black bread and some water. Sometimes one died, and the other found himself chained to a corpse, every hour growing more dreadful. Such is to some of us the helpless sense of guilt. Ask men in prison; ask victims of drink and drugs, excesses and disease. Paul uses the

strongest and best figure for the profoundest sense of sin, then joyfully exclaims in answer to the question, "Who will rescue me from this corpse?" "God will! Thanks be to him through Jesus Christ our Lord!"

Time and space would fail to set forth in detail his imagery, his happy illustrations. Since, however, figures of speech come as naturally to the child of the forest and the untutored as to the cultivated, nothing can be argued from their use, as to his training in Greek schools of rhetoric. Since even the wild Indian's speech is celebrated for its vivid figurativeness, it is not surprising to find this son of the Temple employing all the arts of rhetoric that had been dissected and analyzed by the cultivated Greek; nay, it is not surprising to find him unconsciously excelling in the use of these very arts, which are sometimes all the more powerful for being unconscious. There are few beautifiers of style so efficacious as an earnest and living message. Paul had something to say, and his heart was straitened till that word should be said. He had a message, and woe was him except he proclaimed it.

Already, in a measure, we have tried St. Paul by the conventional tests as to clearness, force, and ease.

Not always does his work shine with the transparency of a mountain stream. Its defects in this regard, due at times to the length and involved character of his sentence structure, which in turn is due to the process of dictation, are manifest even to a cursory examination. Nevertheless, when Paul is dead-in-earnest that he shall be understood, none can be crisper and plainer in his utterance. When he makes his im-

mortal fight against the excesses of the Judaizers in Galatia, there can be no mistaking his meaning. It fairly blazes from his pages. So evident was that meaning that Paul won his point and kept the Galatian churches free.

The same things apply to the tests for force. At times, his circumlocutions detract from vigor of utterance, but at others there is no gainsaying the galvanic power of his words. That he "speaks mere flames," as Luther said, is evident. The effect of his letters is sufficiently clear in the current sayings regarding him which he himself quotes: "His bodily presence is weak, but his letters powerful."

For ease he does not seek, though often he attains it. Force means more to him than any other quality. To reach the minds and hearts of his readers and stab them or shock them broad awake, this is the aim. Clearness, of course, is necessary and the ease which promotes clearness, but force in the great emergencies, as when the freedom of the new faith is involved in Galatia, this is more important than all. Paul would have gained in ease, as has already been suggested, if he had taken time to revise. It is hard work on the part of the writer that promotes ease on the part of the reader. Time spent at one end of the line means time saved at the other. Nevertheless, much of his work flows as quietly and smoothly as if he had spent hours and days perfecting it. Almost any of the great passages so frequently cited in these pages proves this assertion.

Chapter XXIV

PAUL'S LIFE TOLD BY HIS LETTERS

There are few authors whose works more need to be observed in chronological order than Paul. He was converted about 37 A.D. when about 33 or 34 years old. He wrote the Thessalonian letters about fifteen or sixteen years later, that is, at 52 or 53. He wrote II Timothy, about fifteen or sixteen years later than that, somewhere about 65 to 67. His writings therefore cover the period of his life from about fifty years of age to sixty-three or sixty-four.

During that time, the growth of Paul's thought is quite evident. His expectation of the immediate coming of the Messiah, so vivid in the First Thessalonian letter, grows less and less confident and assured. Indeed, that first letter to the church at Thessalonica,—the modern Saloniki, of striking acquaintance—put that little band of Christians all on edge with anticipation of the Advent. They quit work, they grew idle and disputatious. They robed themselves, no doubt, in garments of white and ascended hilltops to be ready for the second coming of the Lord. Paul is forced to write a second letter hurriedly to counteract these excesses. From this time on, his hope of the immediate approach of the Christ grows less and less confident, until, at the sad dark end, in the prison at Rome, he has little or nothing to say of it, knowing that

he, Paul, rather shall go to Christ than that Christ shall come to him.

His theology, too, passes from a fluent into a crystallized form; and one can well feel that his style grows somewhat softer with the growing years. Not that it is less vigorous and virile, for it grows, as he grows older, more intense and accentuated; but rather that his tone is mellowed, with advancing years, like the tone of an organ or a bell. One cannot say that he grows preëminently tenderer—for who could be gentler and kinder than the author of Thessalonians? —but he apparently gains capacity for tenderness, witness the "Love-Letter" to the Philippians. The pastoral letters are tragic in their pathos, resignation, courageous facing of the end. In the last chapters of II Corinthians—his *apologia pro vita sua*—begins the argumentative style, which is continued in Galatians and then Romans. We can see in the first of this group the rise of the irrepressible conflict, the first flashings of the storm, which are continued until the conflict proves victorious in the calmer placidity of the stately Roman letter—the last of the great argumentative group. Then follow the epistles of the imprisonment—letters in which the conflict with the Judaizers, so far as Paul's concern extends, is finished. He is now settled in his thinking, confirmed in his theology, calm in his triumphant waiting for the end.

Deep now is the tenderness of the Philippian letter. Confident is the adoration of Christ in the Ephesian and Colossian letters. Quietly playful the personal letter to Philemon. So they run on until the cold dark end, when left alone, with only Luke, the beloved

physician, he begs for his cloak to shield him from the winter in the dungeon. He breathes his sadness, yet with a faith unwavering and exultant: "I have fought in the good fight; I have run my course; I have kept the faith." There is no braver swan-song.

Always interesting in any work of literature is the unconscious revelation of himself rendered by the author. He may deal only with things far removed from himself, and yet all the time be making a clear picture of himself. The more likely is this to be true, if, like Paul, he is writing personal letters, human communications, sometimes very close and intimate. We shall find much autobiographical matter in the letters of St. Paul, much that reveals his heart.

The character of one's illustrations necessarily reflects somewhat one's environment. Before we are aware we are comparing and explaining matters with what goes on around us. Paul is no exception; and his figures of speech ratify what we know of his life.

Thus he shows a commercial environment. He has walked by the docks of Tarsus on the Cydnus where ships from the East and the West unloaded their burdens, where silks and gold from the Orient and pearls and spices from the South, where timber and goats' hair from the Taurus mountains, and the transport trade through the famous pass called the Cilician gates, made rich the Jews and Greeks of this commercial birthplace of Saul. He sees the slaves bearing these burdens. He sees the young heir of the merchant-prince strut leisurely among that of which he is lord, although he is not yet vastly different from the slave in power. Yet he sees the riches of this inheritance.

He sees the docks and markets thronged with stewards rushing hither and thither with tablets in their hands. He sees the garbage, spoiled fruits and offal of fish, cast into the harbor. He sees great buildings erected, warehouses, temples, schools and colleges, in that seat of ancient learning; and he thinks back to them when he talks of building on the chief cornerstone, of building in wood, hay, stubble, of the house that we all possess, not made with hands, but eternal in the heavens.

He reveals also the military environment. How frequently does he talk of the "armour of light" and "the armour of righteousness" until at last in one of the letters of the imprisonment, he describes minutely all the portions of the armor. Frequently he illustrates by separate pieces of armor, as the breastplate and helmet. The military band clashes and clangs in his ears, as he writes. Furthermore, he shows that he is moving continually in a Greek environment, with Greek civilization, arts, and games about him.

One of Paul's most remarkable rhetorical traits strikes the reader in the entire absence of illustrations drawn from nature. There is practically no appreciation of the wonders of the physical world in his writings. He must have seen some of the rarest and fairest features that nature unfolds. He spent his childhood at the foot of the Taurus mountains back of Tarsus, "on whose snowy peaks the inhabitants of the town were wont, in summer evenings, to watch from the flat roofs of their houses the glow of the sunset." He lived within the sound of the great cataract of the Cydnus river, pouring over the black basalt

cliffs, just above the town. He had traveled up and down the green valley of Jordan, with its lower end crawling into the salt pit of the Dead Sea, over which hovered a barren and desolate air, and with its upper end springing from the blue waves of Galilee which lapped a shore of willows, oleanders, acacia, anemone, and lilies of the valley. He had seen the Vale of Shechem, the bold, fair face of Carmel, the dews of Hermon. He had seen the "Paradise of God" which surrounds Damascus, where the Pharpar and the Golden Abana transform the wilderness into a garden. He had sailed the Mediterranean, with its Bosphorus and Bay of Naples, with its Cyprus and Sicily, and he had seen the same Mediterranean terrible in its wrath. He had seen the snow on the Albans, and the fire from Vesuvius. But all these wonders and beauties of nature seem to have no weight with him. He is so much a man of cities and the dusty faces of busy men that he has no eyes for the glories of the outer world.

In this, he is a strong contrast to our Saviour, whose beautiful language is redolent of the flowers of the valley and radiant with the song of birds; who is ever cognizant of the shepherds and the sowers, the grapes and the thorns, the figs and the thistles, the pearls and the grass of the field, the wolves and the foxes and the fish of the sea, the harvest and the vineyard, the serpents and the doves, the sparrows and the reeds shaken by the wind, the mustard seed and the yokes of the oxen, the tares and the wheat. Indefinitely we might go on turning over the pages of Jesus' words and find them filled with the country air, the breath

of the spirit that breathes where it wills, over Olivet and Jordan and the valleys all round.

Not so with Paul. His illustrations are all drawn from the marts and the quays, the streets and the shops and the lives of men. He talks of buildings and temples, citizenship in heaven, thieves in the night, women in travail, babes and milk, sleepers and drunkards, leaven, the members of the body, and if for the moment he turns to talk of planting and watering, he is thinking rather of the controversy among the Corinthians over Apollos and Cephas and himself, and of the increase of their labors—for instantly he turns back again to the foundations and buildings; and he is, in the next chapter, talking about garbage and offscouring.

If, for a moment, he talked of the fruits of the spirit, we see that he has just been referring to the "works of the flesh," and we are not sure that he uses the word fruit as referring to the fruit of trees or the fruit of the body. Even if he does mean the product of the orchard, it is but one word from the natural world. If he talks of grafting the wild-olive, his thought, after all, fastens itself to an agricultural process, the work of men. All his thought centers upon the virtues of men that he is enumerating. Scarcely a glance of his mind ever turns toward nature. His life and thought run in the busy and dusty paths of men. One thinks inevitably of Robert Browning, the modern poet of crowded city life.

As to the bearing of Paul's style on the question of his Greek culture, the evidence of his manner is

all against his having had extensive training. Paul was not a cultivated Greek rhetorician. He certainly came into contact with Greek institutions and literature. The Roman world was a Greek world. Rome was a Greek city. Even Jerusalem had become largely Grecianized, and the Pharisees were the only party which opposed the introduction of Greek customs. The Sadducees and the Herodians pursued a policy of Grecianizing the people, and introduced Greek games. The young Jews became athletes and in order to strip and present good appearance, had to avoid any disfigurement of their bodies; hence the opposition of the Pharisees to that which endangered an ancient Jewish rite. Paul, then, Pharisee of Pharisees, would naturally have learned much of that which he had to oppose. He traveled with Barnabas, who perhaps possessed some Greek culture. He constantly came in contact with Greek-speaking people and learned their modes of thought. He read the Septuagint.

These facts are all that the style of Paul will warrant us in assuming. He is very far from possessing the amount of polish, for example, that the writer to the Hebrews possessed. Paul is a plain, blunt man and not polished as a self-contained Greek. Undoubtedly if he went to a Greek school of rhetoric in Tarsus, he forgot all he had there learned in Jerusalem and Antioch.

His use of Greek quotations, however, and his employment of illustrations draw from Greek and Roman life does signify that his tolerance was broad toward the heathen world, that he had shaken loose from

Pharisaism, and that his conversion was genuine. He could eat meat offered to idols without asking questions, he could become all things to all men.

The dignity of the salutations and the benedictions with which he opens and closes his letters, the modest self-confidence of his bearing, strike one at once. These salutations, we have already seen, are not the merely formal greetings that characterized the Greek and Roman letters. They are longer and greater. Some men need but to enter a room or to offer a salutation, and their dignity reveals itself.

Sometimes his dignity becomes indignation. He has to assert himself against false accusers. Galatians is his most indignant outburst against his enemies. The only epistle he wrote with his own hand except Philemon, he dashes off in large, angry characters. You can almost imagine his stylus digging into the wax or crackling over the papyrus, as he pronounces his anathema against false teachers and Antichrists.

He can wound his opponents deeply, and can wield subtle irony and cutting satire. Yet he can administer rebuke so kindly! Language to him was, in Farrar's comparison, like the fabled spear of Achilles, which, while used to wound, might be used to heal. His language is sometimes so vivid, so broken with passion, as in the Galatian letter, that many a sentence is begun and never finished, as some new thought crowds out the incompleted one. You would almost fancy sometimes that Paul stood before you defending himself. You can see his brow cloudy with anger; you can see his clenched hand gesticulating against his accusers; you can see his deprecating gesture as he

tells, half hesitating, the sorrows he has borne and the triumphant visions he has seen. You can see his glance fall, and a shade of humble melancholy sweep over his face as he tells of the thorn in the flesh, the minister of Satan.

The Vatican manuscript contains the notice that the rhetorician Longinus concluded an enumeration of the great orators with Paul of Tarsus, who, he said, might even be pronounced first. So generally the world has placed him, the premier of preachers. Some modern scholars have denied that such power and place should be ascribed to Paul, saying that he did not try to be a rhetorician. Whether he tried or not, he succeeded in writing like a great speaker; and a great speaker, no doubt he was.

His dignity and his humility, his vehemence and his tenderness, his anger and his gentleness, show the reaches of a diversified nature. He could console the sorrowing as in the Thessalonian and Philippian letters; he could fathom delicately the secret recesses of the heart and reprove as gently as he could fiercely. Indeed, he could even administer the reproof with a kindly jest.

Sometimes there is apparent an almost feminine sensitiveness and shrinking from rough contact with the world. This acuteness of feeling shows us what fortitude and bravery must have been his in his perils on the sea and on the land, in the city, in the country, at the hands of friends or of strangers.

There is a quiet, businesslike practicality in the short, sharp sentences regarding daily life with which he concludes almost all his epistles; although never

does this practicality escape from the sense of the divine presence in the world.

At other times he is the mystic, the rapt seer with kindling eye, and pale enthusiasm, with nervous fire, and cloud-piercing vision, while he predicts the second coming, or the resurrection, or declares the wonder of a love that overcomes all, or pictures the name that is above every name,—from which nothing shall separate us, "neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities,"—and the bearer of it seated on the right hand of God. Then sometimes his voice rings out, "like a bell with solemn, sweet vibrations,"—like that bell which swings in the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral, and is well called "The Great Paul." It seems as if his feeling were all intense feeling. If anger, it is quivering; if affection, it is almost uncontrollable; "I couldn't forbear to send to you." He longs after his converts, in the tender mercies of Christ. If joy, it is the "Third Heaven."

A diversified character is revealed in these epistles, almost too intense for his frail form. An irreparable loss it would be to the world if these letters should be destroyed. We could better forfeit any other books except only those which tell the story of Him whose Paul was, and whom he served.

Book Four: LEADING ON TO REVELATION

Book Four: LEADING ON TO REVELATION

Chapter XXV

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER TO THE HEBREWS

"Scripture not elaborate! Scripture not ornamental in diction! and musical in cadence! Why consider the Epistle to the Hebrews—where is there in the classics any composition more carefully, more artificially written?" So speaks Cardinal Newman.

This letter, addressed to Jewish Christians, shows a mastery of Greek style, a balance of sentences, a happy choice of words, sonorous and harmonious words, an aptness in comparisons, a marching dignity of thought, that compels respect and attention as well as stirs emotion. The writer composes in calmness and deliberation, unhurried in his Roman residence, undismayed by persecutions and dangers. He is a friend of Timothy and therefore a friend of Paul. He shows, indeed, in his shades of thought, Paul's influence.

His style, however, contrasts with that of Paul in many particulars, the most striking of which is its calmness, leisure, finish. There are no sentences left flying at loose ends, no subjects left poised without predicates, no phrases and clauses heaped upon each other in almost endless confusion. It is the work of

a man who pays attention to form, polish and the rules of rhetoric.

"Who wrote the Epistle in very truth God only knows," said Origen in the first half of the third century; and the statement is still true. Of the epistle in general we may say that "like the great Melchizedek of sacred story, it marches forth in lonely royal and sacerdotal dignity, and like him is without lineage; we know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth." Various conjectures assign the authorship to Barnabas, to Apollos, or to other companions of St. Paul. The most likely of these is that Apollos is the author—that trained rhetorician, that polished Alexandrian, whom Paul welcomed so gladly to Asia Minor and trained more fully in Christian thought.

The first sentence of this epistle is a contrast to the nervous manner of St. Paul. The carefully built structure is stately and noble and reminds one a little of the style of St. Luke in his two dedications to Theophilus:

"Many were the forms and fashions in which God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets, but in these days at the end he has spoken to us by a Son —a Son whom he appointed heir of the universe, as it was by him that he created the world. He, reflecting God's bright glory and stamped with God's own character, sustains the universe with his word of power; when he had secured our purification from sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; and thus he is superior to the angels, as he has inherited a Name superior to theirs."

After certain quotations from Hebrew scriptures concerning angels, and the words God spoke through them and of them, he begins his second chapter with two well-built sentences of admonition:

"We must therefore pay closer attention to what we have heard, in case we drift away. For if the divine word spoken by angels held good, if transgression and disobedience met with due punishment in every case, how shall we escape the penalty for neglecting a salvation which was originally proclaimed by the Lord himself and guaranteed to us by those who heard him."

Further on in the same chapter, the author, continuing the comparison of Jesus to angels, declares him to have been made temporarily a little lower than they for his suffering and death, only to be exalted, crowned with glory and honor. The Hebrew people talked and dreamed much of angelic messengers, and their thought has passed over to our own time. Milton sings of their cohorts, rank on rank, as posting over land and ocean without rest, to do the bidding of their Lord. Edmund Spenser, in the Faërie Queene has dainty lines regarding them:

"How oft do they their silver bowers leave,
To come to succour us that succour want!
How oft do they with golden pinions cleave
The flitting skyes, like flying pursuivant,
Against fowle feendes to ayd us militant!

They for us fight, they watch, and dewly ward,
And their bright squadrons round about us plant;
And all for love, and nothing for reward;
O, why should heavenly God to men have such regard!"

Later the author draws a comparison between Moses and Jesus and shows how the sinful children of Israel could not "enter into his rest,"—a phrase repeatedly employed. Moses had not entered into the promised land, but entered into that rest. For his limitations, he died in Mount Nebo and there was buried. For the people of God, however, "there remaineth therefore a rest." One of the noble poems of our language, the Burial of Moses, by Cecil Frances Alexander, contains, in its closing stanza, the same thought:

"O, lonely tomb in Moab's land!
O, dark Beth-peor's hill!
Speak to these curious hearts of ours,
And teach them to be still:
God hath his mysteries of grace,
Ways that we cannot tell,
He hides them deep, like the secret sleep
Of him he loved so well."

There is a wealth of comparison, metaphor, simile, sparkling like well-cut gems in this epistle, to teach the lessons of endurance in Christ, firm as an anchored ship; of the mystery of personal union with Christ, as mysterious a matter as that prince of peace, Melchizedek, without father and without mother; of the

high priesthood of Jesus who enters for all of us to make sacrifice behind the veil.

How now shall we approach that great eleventh chapter of Hebrews, which has been called the Westminster Abbey of Scripture, where are enshrined the names of the Heroes of Faith in Hebrew annals! John Stuart Blackie, in his Lay Sermons, says of it:

"Look this chapter of Hebrews freely and fully in the face, and see what it means as the great authorized interpreter of the moral history of the world, not only in the case of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses, and Daniel, and Samuel, and all the prophets, but also in all the leading assertions of human and social dignity in later times, whether against sacerdotal intolerance in Constantinople and Rome, or political atrocity in Naples and Milan."

This monumental chapter opens with a definition of faith which has become embedded in our thinking. It is followed by a catalogue of great names that spans the whole arch of the Hebrew firmament, blazing like stars.

"Now faith means we are confident of what we hope for, convinced of what we do not see. It was for this that the men of old won their record. It is by faith we understand that the world was fashioned by the word of God, and thus the visible was made out of the invisible. It was by faith that Abel offered God a richer sacrifice than Cain did, and thus won from God the record of being 'just,' on the score of

what he gave; he died, but by his faith he is speaking to us still. It was by faith that Enoch was taken to heaven, so that he never died (he was not overtaken by death, for God had taken him away). For before he was taken to heaven, his record was that he had satisfied God; and apart from faith it is impossible to satisfy him, for the man who draws near to God must believe that he exists and that he does reward those who seek him. . . .

"It was by faith that Abraham obeyed his call to go forth to a place which he would receive as an inheritance; he went forth, although he did not know where he was to go. It was by faith that he sojourned in the promised land, as in a foreign country, residing in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were co-heirs with him of the same promise; he was waiting for the City with its fixed foundations, whose builder and maker is God."

Chapter XXVI

THE FIERY ST. JAMES

The author of the Epistle of James is not the brother of John, son of Zebedee, but is the one spoken of as "The Lord's brother." He was not one of the twelve. Jesus' brethren did not believe on Him until after the resurrection. When James, the son of Zebedee, one of the Sons of Thunder, as he and John were called, met death under Herod Agrippa I, James, the Lord's brother, became the head of the Jerusalem church.

The Epistle of James addressed to the Dispersion, the Jewish Christians scattered all over the world, is full of hard, practical common sense. The author shows himself a man of affairs, a man of the world. "Be ye doers of the word" is the keynote of the Epistle. It is a letter that ought to appeal to a hard-headed practical day and country like ours.

"Its style is remarkable," declares Farrar. "It combines pure and eloquent and rhythmical Greek with Hebrew intensity of expression. It has all the fiery sternness and vehemence of the ancient prophets. It abounds in passionate ejaculations, rapid questions, graphic similitudes. It is less a letter than a moral harangue stamped with the lofty personality of the writer, and afire with his burning sincerity. 'What a noble man speaks in this Epistle!' exclaims the eloquent Herder. 'Deep unbroken patience in suffering! Greatness in poverty! Joy in sorrow! Simplicity,

sincerity, firm direct confidence in prayer! How he wants action; action, not words, not dead faith!'"

The very first word is one of cheer to those enduring trials and temptations, containing a simile of a white-capped surge of the sea:

"Greet it as pure joy, my brothers, when you come across any sort of trial, sure that the sterling temper of your faith produces endurance; only, let your endurance be a finished product, so that you may be finished and complete, with never a defect. Whoever of you is defective in wisdom, let him ask God who gives to all men without question or reproach, and the gift will be his. Only, let him ask in faith, with never a doubt; for the doubtful man is like surge of the sea whirled and swayed by the wind; that man need not imagine he will get anything from God, double-minded creature that he is, wavering at every turn."

In the first chapter also is a sentence which has embedded itself in the prayer language of the church for ages, both for its consciousness of the source of all good and also for its eloquence:

"All we are given is good, and all our endowments are faultless, descending from above, from the Father of the heavenly lights, who knows no change of rising and setting, who casts no shadow on the earth."

The end of this chapter defines religion for us in a manner, if not comprehensive, at least practical and suggestive:

"Pure, unsoiled religion in the judgment of God the Father means this: to care for orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself from the stain of the world."

The democracy of the head of the early church appears in the opening words of the second chapter. St. James reflects the Sermon on the Mount perhaps more than any other New Testament writer:

"My brothers, as you believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Glory, pay no servile regard to people. Suppose there comes into your meeting a man who wears gold rings and handsome clothes, and also a poor man in dirty clothes; if you attend to the wearer of the handsome clothes and say to him, 'Sit here, this is a good place,' and tell the poor man, 'You can stand,' or 'Sit there at my feet,' are you not drawing distinctions in your own minds and proving that you judge people with partiality? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and to inherit the realm which he has promised to those who love him?"

"The Apostle of Works," as James is called, now presents the contrast between a barren and doctrinaire faith, and Christian works, in a practical passage that is famous in Christian literature and thought:

"My brothers, what is the use of any one declaring he has faith, if he has no deeds to show? Can his faith save him? Suppose some brother or sister is ill clad and short of daily food; if any of you says to them,

'Depart in peace! Get warm, get food,' without supplying their bodily needs, what use is that? So faith, unless it has deeds, is dead in itself."

There is a classic statement of the dangers in the excessive use of the human tongue, in the third chapter, which has not elsewhere been surpassed. The tragic truth of it we all instantly recognize:

"We put bridles into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, and so, you see, we can move the whole of their bodies. Look at ships too; for all their size and speed under stiff winds, they are turned by a tiny rudder wherever the mind of the steersman chooses. So the tongue is a small member of the body, but it can boast of great exploits. What a forest is set ablaze by a little spark of fire! And the tongue is a fire, the tongue proves a very world of mischief among our members, staining the whole of the body and setting fire to the round circle of existence with a flame fed by hell. For while every kind of beast and bird, of creeping animals and creatures marine, is tameable and has been tamed by mankind, no man can tame the tongue—plague of disorder that it is, full of deadly venom! With the tongue we bless the Lord and Father, and with the tongue we curse men made in God's likeness; blessing and cursing stream from the same lips! My brothers, this ought not to be. Does a fountain pour out fresh water and brackish from the same hole? Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives? Or a vine, figs? No more can salt water yield fresh."

In contrast the writer sings the praises of pure wisdom:

"Who among you is wise and learned? Let him show by his good conduct, with the modesty of wisdom, what his deeds are. . . . The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, forbearing, conciliatory, full of mercy and wholesome fruit, unambiguous, straightforward; and the peacemakers who sow in peace reap righteousness."

A profound aphorism as to the real root of evil-doing and its origin in ignorance, which has taken shape in the modern definition that "sin is an attempt to realize the absurd," appears at the close of the fourth chapter:

"But here you are, boasting in your proud pretensions! All such boasting is wicked."

It is said that James, Bishop of Jerusalem, was an Ebionite, vowed to poverty and an ascetic life. He is pictured as wearing a simple white garment and his hair, unshorn according to his vow, hanging over his shoulders. It is to be expected therefore that he shall denounce riches in unmeasured terms; because the rich men of his time, whose actions led to the destruction of Jerusalem, undoubtedly deserved denunciation. Read the scathing words in chapter five:

"Come now, you rich men, weep and shriek over your impending miseries!

You have been storing up treasure in the very last
days;
your wealth lies rotting,
and your clothes are moth-eaten;
your gold and silver lie rusted over,
and their rust will be evidence against you,
it will devour your flesh like fire.
See, the wages of which you have defrauded the
workmen who mowed your fields call out,
and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears
of the Lord of Hosts.
You have revelled on earth and plunged into dissi-
pation;
you have fattened yourselves as for the Day of
slaughter;
you have condemned, you have murdered the right-
eous—unresisting."

Chapter XXVII

LETTERS OF HOPE AND LOVE

The epistles of Peter are just what we should expect of that impulsive and erring, loving and hoping, leader of the twelve, the rock apostle.

These writings sound like Peter, look like Peter, feel like Peter. They are in harmony with what we know of his tempestuous, generous, warm-hearted and altogether human character. He writes from Rome, near the end of his life, having passed through great dangers, and still in great dangers, in tones thrilling with hope and joy. Following his address to the sojourning Christians everywhere, he utters this thanksgiving:

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy we have been born anew to a life of hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, born to an unscathed, inviolate, unfading inheritance; it is kept in heaven for you, and the power of God protects you by faith till you do inherit the salvation which is all ready to be revealed at the last hour. You will rejoice then, though for the passing moment you may need to suffer various trials; that is only to prove your faith is sterling (far more precious than gold which is perishable and yet is tested by fire), and it redounds to your praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

You never knew him but you love him; for the moment you do not see him, but you believe in him, and you will thrill with an unspeakable and glorious joy to obtain the outcome of your faith in the salvation of your souls."

He coins, in the second chapter, that phrase, "strangers and pilgrims," or "sojourners and exiles":

"Beloved, as sojourners and exiles I appeal to you to abstain from the passions of the flesh that wage war upon the soul."

He shows his practical sense in his advice to Christians to be subject to their rulers and even to honor them:

"Submit for the Lord's sake to any human authority; submit to the emperor as supreme, and to governors as deputed by him for the punishment of wrongdoers and the encouragement of honest people—for it is the will of God that by your honest lives you should silence the ignorant charges of foolish persons. Live like free men, only do not make your freedom a pretext for misconduct; live like servants of God. Do honour to all, love the brotherhood, reverence God, honour the emperor."

There is no finer worldly wisdom, and no more needed admonition even to this day than that offered husbands, wives, servants, in the second and third chapters.

It is not surprising, therefore, that this man of affairs, even though the Apostle of Hope, should desire the disciples everywhere to be "ready with a reply for anyone who calls you to account for the hope you cherish."

It is not surprising, too, that he who had denied his Lord and had been forgiven should utter the sentiment: "Love hides a host of sins."

It is not surprising, further, that he who had boasted that, though all men should desert Jesus, yet would not he, and then who had turned round, cursing and swearing that he did not know Him, should now say: "The haughty God opposes, but to the humble he gives grace."

Neither is it surprising that the impetuous apostle should, in the first chapter of his second epistle, sing the song of self-control with a catalogue of plodding virtues leading up to self-control and following in its train:

"For this very reason, do you contrive to make it your whole concern to furnish your faith with resolution, resolution with intelligence, intelligence with self-control, self-control with stedfastness, stedfastness with piety, piety with brotherliness, brotherliness with Christian love."

There is a reference to the morning star in this same chapter:

"We have gained fresh confirmation of the prophetic word. Pray attend to that word; it shines like

a lamp within a darksome spot, till the Day dawns and the daystar rises within your hearts."

Speaking of those who are subject to the dominion of the flesh and materialism, he makes this poetic comparison in the second chapter:

"These people are waterless fountains and mists driven by a squall, for whom the nether gloom of darkness is reserved."

Grouped with these letters of the Apostle of Hope, may be placed those of the Apostle of Love, St. John. He it was who, as Bishop of Ephesus, growing very old and white, was carried into the assembly of the church in his later years, and from his chair gave out over and over the same message: "Little children, love one another."

John, the only apostle who came to a natural death, which Browning calls the "Death in the Desert," the author of the Revelation, seen on the Isle of Patmos, gives us three short letters, throbbing with love. "My little children" is his favorite style of address to those to whom he writes. He affectionately addresses fathers and sons, speaking to the young men because they are strong, paying them delicate compliments. He hymns love in strains second only to St. Paul's thirteenth of First Corinthians, considers love the keynote to the Christian life, believes that the passage into real life is through love, and details the qualities of love and its magic effect upon life.

The second and third letters are personal letters, one

to a certain "elect lady and her children" and one to Gaius. They express a tender personal affection.

Finally, there is the general epistle of Jude, or Judas, startling in its virile, nervous style. It is filled with unusual comparisons, original and stimulating similes. Speaking of those who are sunken in the flesh and its desire, the writer says:

"These people are stains on your love-feasts; they have no qualms about carousing in your midst, they look after none but themselves—rainless clouds, swept along by the wind, trees in autumn without fruit, doubly dead and so uprooted, wild waves foaming out their own shame, wandering stars for whom the nether gloom of darkness has been reserved eternally. It was of these, too, that Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesied, when he said,

" 'Behold the Lord comes with myriads of his holy ones, . . .'

For these people are murmurers, grumbling at their lot in life—they fall in with their own passions, their talk is arrogant, they pay court to men to benefit themselves."

Chapter XXVIII

THE GLORIES OF REVELATION

This book, together with the book of Daniel in the Old Testament, has been the favorite stamping ground of religious faddists. All those who had some case to make out resorted to it for proof passages. Those who held special theories about the end of the world, the ushering in of the millennium, the world-Armageddon which is to precede it, could easily figure out the years from the "time, times, and half a time," and identify the great characters of history, like Napoleon and Jefferson Davis, with the beasts and dragons which move through its pages. Those who held pet enmities against certain branches of the church or certain heretics in it, could always find damning reference to their foes in its obscure but highly picturesque visions.

If, however, one takes up this book with the knowledge that it had reference to the places, events, and persons of the day in which it was written, and does not in any sense attempt to forecast the future, its gorgeous imagery becomes fairly intelligible and profoundly attractive. If one realizes that this book came as a solace and as inspiration to persecuted Christians, when it was all one's life was worth to bear that hated name; if one grasps the fact that John, the Apostle, now Bishop of Ephesus, veils reference to Nero under the guise of the beast, and Rome under

the name of Babylon, the mighty courtesan, at a time when to mention the Emperor with a slur or the Eternal City with criticism, was to put the writer's life in jeopardy; if one tries to imagine what courage this bold book must have infused into fainting, and all but failing Christian hearts; then one can read the book even to-day with inspiration and hope.

Perhaps few books in the Bible so appeal to children and adolescents as this one. Who does not remember in childhood hearing with bated breath the passages about the wonderful dream city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of Heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband, about the jeweled gates and walls, and streets of gold, about the tree of life and the river of the water of life clear as crystal, and about the throne of God and of the lamb? It is the wealth of concrete imagery employed which so captures the mind of childhood and, shall we not say, of all of us, and renders this book inimitable. The good Scotchman, in "Beside the Bonny Brier Bush," felt that one ought not to waste superlative adjectives, but "save some for the twenty-second chapter of Revelation."

In order fully to appreciate this earliest production of St. John, the beloved, probably written during those strenuous days in the late sixties when Paul himself was beheaded at Rome, one should be familiar with this peculiar style of writing called the "Apocalyptic literature," in vogue among the Jews. Ezekiel and Daniel have some of it; and the books that used to be bound in our mothers' and fathers' Bibles, between the Old Testament and the New, had much.

But even without such familiarity, certain passages of rugged grandeur appeal to us all.

"Be faithful, though you have to die for it, and I will give you the crown of Life" must have rung in the hearts of the seven churches of Asia, at a time when they never knew whose turn it was next to prove his faith by his death. Perhaps it rang again in Smyrna, of late, in one of those very seven churches!

Then the refrain, which comes in constant reiteration through the first half of the book, echoed in our childish hearts, and echoes still:

"Let any one who has an ear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

What the Spirit said to the church at Laodicea might well be spoken in certain churches yet, even as it was spoken in other words to the church in "The Servant in the House." The words still sing in our ears:

"I know your doings, you are neither cold nor hot —would you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, neither hot nor cold, I am going to spit you out of my mouth. . . . Lo, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and sup with him, and he with me. 'The conqueror I will allow to sit beside me on my throne, as I myself have conquered and sat down beside my Father on his throne.' Let any one who has an ear listen to what the Spirit says to the churches."

In the next two chapters are passages which have passed forever into the classic music of worship like this refrain:

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God almighty,
who was and is and is coming."

Or, like this one which, sung by the great choruses in "The Messiah," reverberates through the world. The writer seems straining every nerve to find words for his praise:

"Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels round the throne and of the living Creatures and of the Presbyters, numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, crying aloud, 'The slain Lamb deserves to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing.' And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth crying, 'Blessing and honour and glory and dominion for ever and ever, to him who is seated on the throne and to the Lamb!'"

In the sixth chapter come the four horsemen of the Apocalypse, images of war, pestilence, famine, death, which Ibañez turned to such good account.

Some further imagery in this chapter is too apt and beautiful to be lightly passed over:

"And when he opened the sixth seal, I looked; and a great earthquake took place, the sun turned black as sackcloth, the full moon turned like blood, the stars of the sky dropped to earth as a fig tree shaken by

a gale sheds her unripe figs, the sky was swept aside like a scroll being folded up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place."

In the seventh chapter, the canvas is crowded with vast numbers, in a passage that has endeared itself to discouraged and timorous Christians in all ages and lands. Here personal immortality and eternal life are set forth in language that admits of no doubt or hesitation. The writer has taken Jesus at his word, who answered once and for all the age-long question, if a man die shall he live again, answered it in an unmistakable affirmative.

Jesus,—and indeed the entire New Testament,—nowhere undertakes to prove immortality any more than he undertakes to prove God. He assumes both. He apparently feels that there are some truths too great to require proof. In his plain, matter-of-fact fashion, he says, "Were it not so would I have told you I was going to prepare a place for you?" A man wastes his breath and his time who tries to prove that God is. Indeed, no one can prove to humanity that He is not. So Jesus assumes Him. In the same manner he assumes immortality.

He is the first of all religious teachers to speak without hesitation or the tremor of doubt upon this question. The Hebrews held but a dim hope of a future life. The Greeks, as through Pindar, talked occasionally of the "golden islands of the blest"; but these were only for the few, not the many. And Homer puts it into the mouth of one of his heroes in the land of Shades to bemoan his lot:

"Talk not of reigning in this dolorous gloom;
Nor think, he said, vain words can ease my doom.
Better by far a weight of woes to bear,
And in affliction breathe the vital air,
Slave to the meanest hind that begs his bread
Than reign the sceptered monarch of the dead."

How sad a state is his! Contrast his condition with the triumphant paean of the seer of Patmos:

"After that I looked, and there was a great host whom no one could count, from every nation and tribe and people and tongue, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clad in white robes, with palm-branches in their hands; and they cried with a loud voice, 'Saved by our God who is seated on the throne, and by the Lamb!' And all the angels surrounded the throne and the Presbyters and the four living Creatures, and fell on their faces before the throne, worshipping God and crying, 'Even so! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God for ever and ever: Amen!' Then one of the Presbyters addressed me, saying, 'Who are these, clad in white robes? where have they come from?' I said to him, 'You know, my lord.' So he told me, 'These are the people who have come out of the great Distress, who washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

For this they are now before the throne of God,
serving him day and night within his temple,
and he who is seated on the throne shall overshadow them.
Never again will they hunger, never again will they thirst,

never shall the sun strike them, nor any scorching heat;
for the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd,
guiding them to fountains of living water;
and God will wipe every tear from their eyes.'"

Milton has used much of the eloquence of Revelation, St. Michael and the war of the angels, Lucifer falling from heaven; and our own Battle Hymn of the Republic gathers from John the figure of the Lord "trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored." Time would fail, however, to tell of how our English literature has been colored and decorated by the gold and the gems of Revelation.

As he nears the close of his book, the lonely seer on the Isle of Patmos beholds visions of increasing loveliness and grandeur, and his voice swells like an organ. In all literature there is nothing more awe-inspiring, not Dante's Inferno, not Milton's Paradise, than the two final chapters of Revelation. Indeed, it is from these chapters, and from this entire vision of John, that all other rhapsodies, concerning the life that is to be, are derived. He beholds the celestial city, gem-bedecked, coming down out of heaven, adorned as a bride for her husband.

He goes into detail in his description of the city; and if it is true that in this book John does not show the Greek polish that he reveals in his gospel and epistles of a much later day, none the less, he discovers a vocabulary, a knowledge of precious stones, an artistic sense, and a daring vigor and abandon that are startling.

The music of his words swells on the ear, rich and full, and strangely moves the heart to its profoundest depths:

"But I saw no temple in the City, for its temple is the Lord God almighty and the Lamb. And the City needs no sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God illumines it, and the Lamb lights it up.

By its light will the nations walk;
and into it will the kings of earth bring their glories
(the gates of it will never be shut by day,
and night there shall be none),
they will bring to it the glories and treasures of the nations.
Nothing profane, none who practises abomination or falsehood shall enter,
but those alone whose names are written in the Lamb's book of Life.

"Then he showed me the river of the water of Life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the streets of the City; on both sides of the river grew the tree of Life, bearing twelve kinds of fruit, each month having its own fruit; and the leaves served to heal the nations.

None who is accursed will be there;
but the throne of God and the Lamb will be within it,
his servants will serve and worship him,
they will see his face,
and his name will be on their foreheads.
Night there shall be none;
they need no lamp or sun to shine upon them,
for the Lord God will illumine them;
and they will reign for ever and ever."

Chapter XXIX

THE LONG WAY WE HAVE COME

It is not after all such a long way. About twenty years of literary activity we have traversed, a little over half a century of historical event. That is all. Both the literature and the events spring from a small, a very small, body of obscure people and comprise a very small volume. Yet the effect upon the world!

We call these twenty-seven books, or rather pamphlets, the New Testament. The phrase is not accurately descriptive. The word "Testament" suggests a will; and these books do not partake of the nature of a last will and testament. Rather are they the rising than the setting of a sun. The "New Covenant" is suggested as a better title; but "Covenant" is a word now little used. It applies to treaties, agreements, contracts, and is, therefore, technical, diplomatic. In so far as it stands for a new rainbow of hope and promise spanning our heaven, it is doubtless a good word, and meaningful. The symbol we use to describe the first four books, if extended to the whole twenty-seven, would carry a better note—"The Gospel." But "Testament" we have called the collection so long that "Testament" we shall go on calling it to the end of the chapter.

We have browsed through the little library from first to last, taking bits of beauty here and there, but conscious all the time that all of it is beautiful, all of

it true. Perhaps the reader of this volume will now turn to the Testament and feed for himself. We have browsed through the plains dotted and starred with oriental lilies of the valley, poppies, oleanders, anemones, and naturally our attention has lingered upon these bright colors; but all the time we have felt, have we not, the charm of the entire valley or hillside where we have fed, the long green grass, the soft sunlight, the blue haze on distant mountain tops, the shimmer on lake and river.

Not all of the fine touches in the story of Christ in the gospels have we seen. Indeed, we might browse a lifetime and not get them all. Some new and striking beauty gleams and glows in the tale each time we take it up. The "Charming Rabbi" becomes ever more charming, and his words—whether of poetry, epigram, story, or direct teaching—take on new and larger meanings. We never tire of reading or hearing the story of Jesus; and new biographies of him, with new aids to our imagination, appear in every age and are acclaimed with wide popularity. Inexhaustible seems the store of treasure for us in his sacred person.

Almost as deeply interesting, stimulating, encouraging to us has been the story of the rise of the church, the body which was destined to preserve his message, his spirit, his example. It is the church which grew logically and inevitably out of His life, death, and teaching, the church essential to the spread of His gospel through the world, the church which had to arise if His followers were to obey His command to witness for Him to the uttermost part of the earth.

We have gathered bits here and there among the

Epistles, which carry on the story of our Christ and of our church. We have kept company with the great souls, saints, sages, heroes, martyrs who march through them—Paul, Apollos, Barnabas, Peter, James, John, Silas, Timothy, Titus. Their thoughts have become our thoughts, their griefs, privations, hopes, aspirations, ours. The more we know them, the better we shall penetrate their hearts and the better we shall love them. They are our friends, our brothers, as well as our prophets and teachers.

Then we have stood with the aged John, whom Jesus loved best of all, on the Isle of Patmos, the isle of vision, in the blue Aegean Sea, and have beheld things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme. In this apocalypse lies the germ for Dante, Milton, Ibañez, and a host of painters. This vision of John's has caught the imagination of childhood, for it is the most allied of all in the Bible to fairyland and the world of magic. Its pure river of water of life, moreover, and its trees of life on this side of the river and on that, have comforted age and hope deferred for many centuries.

This book, the New Testament, has destroyed one world and built another. First it honeycombed the foundations of old Rome, already spongy with decay, and helped to bring the structure tumbling to the ground. On the ruins it built western civilization. It incited the crusades, the revival of learning, the reformation; and is it too much to say that it led to the founding of the great democracies of the modern world?

We speak of ours as a Christian civilization, and

so, indeed, it is. All that is best in our social customs, our amenities of life, our ethics, our very jurisprudence itself, rests upon the teachings of Jesus. If his influence were taken out of our world, Europe and America would be very different from what they are. Men do not necessarily acknowledge Him in order to be under His influence, and unconsciously to lead lives permeated by His presence. Nobody can measure, and but few of us even imagine, the effect of these twenty-seven books upon the world.

Deeply as we have been moved by the isolated passages which, in this present study, have passed under our eyes, we can form no conception of the sway they have exercised over millions of hearts in the last two thousand years. They have nerved the soldier, have fed the traveler, have given companionship to the lonely pioneer plunging into wildernesses to make a home. They have encouraged those struggling with handicaps, like incurable disease, the "thorn in the flesh," to keep on working to the end. They have lent solace to old age, and smoothed the pillow of the dying. They have inspired much of the world's greatest literature and art. Their service to humanity in supplying hope and courage can never be put into words.

We lay down this little volume of twenty-seven pamphlets with a sigh of wonder and awe. We are amazed that it should ever have been produced at all. That it was brought into being is the miracle of all time, beside which all other wonders become small and understandable. How could any human wisdom have spoken the Beatitudes, the Golden Rule, the

Lord's Prayer, the parable of the Lost Son, Paul's address to the Athenians, or his hymn to love, the paean to heroic faith in Hebrews, and the final vision of Revelation? It could not have been done by human wisdom. It is a work of the divine spirit.

THE END

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